

T H E
EFFECTS OF THE PASSIONS,
O R
MEMOIRS OF FLORICOURT.

FROM THE FRENCH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

V O L. II.

L O N D O N:

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T H E
EFFECTS of the PASSIONS,
O R
MEMOIRS of FLORICOURT.

BOOK THE THIRD.

CAN I assume courage enough to pursue the thread of this history?—can I look back on its heart-piercing scenes without renewing all my woes, and tearing open wounds which a succession of years has scarce been able to close? All was now over with me. I had discovered a glimpse of happiness! But is it formed for poor humanity?—can we snatch it through the croud of obstructions

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which

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which surround it?—Our every step towards it being an impediment to our pursuit. Never was enterprize better concerted than mine, never was scheme more guarded by secrecy, or more likely to be attended with success; yet one fatal moment destroyed all my hopes and taught me to feel the imbecility of human prudence.

The assiduities of the domestics who had entered my apartment on the sound of my bell, restored me to sensibility. But my only sensation was grief. Plunged into a kind of distraction and delirium by despair, I now called on Julia—I called on her father. Avenge yourself! cried I, and punish me! I have robbed you of all that's valuable, and have lost all that's dear to me! My soul being overwhelmed by the calamities of the present, shrunk from it with horror, and returned to the past: all my uncle had
said

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said to me, the advice he had given me, the arguments he had made use of to induce me to subdue my growing passion, and the fatal effects he predicted of its indulgence, now rushed into my mind, and redoubled all its anguish. The domestics stared at me, without comprehending my meaning, or knowing how I came to be in such a condition; and after having passed the day in this quiet manner, ran to inform my uncle. He came to me immediately, but could get nothing from me except incoherent expressions; all I said was either dolorous or terrible; and the dead! tombs! and Julia! were blended together in an inexplicable manner.

M. de Merville stood by my bed side, and heard my rhapsodies with astonishment, not being able to comprehend one syllable of what I said; though the despair and anguish with which I seemed

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possessed, greatly distressed and terrified him. Alas! he knew not the fatal sense my words contained,

I passed the night in this distracted manner; but the following day seemed to abate my transports. The cordials of Vilson, who returned to me as soon as possible, and the skill of the physicians called in, seeming to have produced these effects. Copious bleedings, which were necessary in order to quell the impetuosity and fury of my blood, and which almost reduced me to death's door, at length restored my reason. The first objects which struck me, were my bed, my chamber, my uncle and Vilson in tears. I looked at them with a gloomy countenance, where absence of mind was strongly marked, wishing to discover how I came there. You weep, Sir! said I to my uncle. Ah! it is for me to weep! after the commission of a crime
that

that nothing can ever efface ! O Vilson !
 O my friend ! where is Julia ? then relapsing again into delirium, what is become of her ? where am I myself ? I now broke out into the most bitter lamentations, my imagination being again forcibly struck by all that had happened. My uncle and Vilson trembled, but would not speak to me ; and the former, terrified at what he saw, dared not interrogate Vilson, who was in the mean time too much affected to explain this mystery. Every thing was therefore attributed to my grievous malady and disordered imagination.

In vain did my uncle press me in his arms, in vain did he endeavour to moderate my transports, and conjure me not to embitter his old age ; in vain did my friend Vilson join in his supplications ; I was lost to all sensations except that which totally engrossed me, and was no

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longer myself. I passed the day in this condition, and the following night brought me no relief.

While I was in this state of tumult and distraction; while my uncle was plunged into despair at my situation, and Vilson was lifting up his eyes to heaven in an agony of grief; a scene equally terrifying passed at the Convent;—a scene which in its consequences threatened me with destruction!

On the day which succeeded the demolition of all my hopes, the Nuns assembled, not in the least surprized at the absence of Julia at midnight; as she had, (according to my directions) asked leave to collect herself for the approaching solemnity; an indulgence they thought necessary to grant her: but their prayers being ended, they began to be alarmed, went to her chamber, and found it fastened;

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tened; knocked several times; and listened without success, every thing being silent there. The Superior now appeared, and called on Julia, commanding her to open the door; but no answer was given, and all was still. An hour having passed in vain conjectures, the door was at length broke open; but no Julia was to be found. What can have become of the Novice? cried they all in a breath: Where can she be? They now searched throughout the Convent, entered into every cell, investigated every place, and found all the doors fastened as usual: the garden gate had not yet been opened, and they knew the walls were too high to admit of any ladder being placed against them. All these researches redoubled their consternation: they called aloud; they ran up and down; and the whole community was in an uproar.

The time for the conclusion of the ceremony being come, the Grand Vicar,

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followed

followed by M. d'Erlet, arrived. The Superior and all the Nuns with one voice informed them that Julia was not to be found, and that they knew not what was become of her. The Grand Vicar seemed greatly surprized; and the Nuns trembled; all the promised riches to the Convent being lost. The monster who bore the name of father, plunged into despair at having his vengeance thus disappointed, obtained leave to enter into the Convent with the Grand Vicar. He flew to his daughter's chamber, examined all her cloaths, and by chance found one of my letters, a letter Julia had forgot to burn among the rest. He opened it in a hurry, hoping it might contain something to corroborate his suspicions; but found nothing in it except the bitter complaints of a lover at the absence of her he adores, accusations of the barbarian who was the cruel cause of his misfortunes, and fruitless wishes. As this letter was old, they
searched

searched for more, but to no purpose, the vigilance of Julia having disappointed all their malice. M. d'Erlet, tho' enraged at not being able to make any discovery that might elucidate this mysterious affair, made no doubt of my having carried off his daughter, and those who had accompanied him in his search were of the same opinion. The difficulty now lay in discovering the means by which I had effected my purpose: they again searched the Convent; and finding no way of escape there, M. d'Erlet returned to his own house: here he made enquiries whether I had appeared in the town, and was informed I was very ill. He had heard this agreeable news before, and had rejoiced in the misery he had occasioned; but he now fancied it was a pretended illness, invented to divert his suspicions, and that I was really absent.

He directed a man on whom he could rely, to go to my uncle's house, and en-

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deavour to ascertain the truth of the report circulated about my illness; and taking advantage of the disorder which reigned in the house, he came to my bed side, to be convinced of my situation. He heard me, with sobs and tears, and an universal tremor, call on the name of Julia, and add that I had lost her for ever! but as the fatal ceremony was to have been completed that day, he could draw nothing further from what I said, than the despair and anguish of a lover at being deprived of her he loved.

The emissary now returned to him who had sent him, and M. d'Erlet trembled with rage at his disappointment. He wished to commence a suit against me for having carried off his daughter, and robbed a Convent; either of which crimes, if proved, would have been capital. But time delayed his vengeance, and gave him pain: he had however still the satisfaction

faction of knowing I was within his reach, and that I could not escape him, as my illness prevented my flight. He now redoubled his enquiries, and was happy enough to meet with the men who waited for me with the chaise and horses, whom he instantly interrogated, and by money extorted the truth from them: but all their evidence amounted only to my having hired and paid them for their attendance at a certain place, to which I never came. He now prevailed on these men to accompany him to the place appointed, and soon arrived at the spot where we were to have embarked. He discovered the boat which I had bespoke and kept in readiness, and ordered the boatman to be questioned: they answered they were detained there in order to convey me to a ship which had waited for me all the preceding night at the distance of half a mile, and which had sailed about noon.

The

The moment d'Erlet had received this happy intelligence, he sent for proper people to take down the boatmen's depositions; and being armed with these particulars, and followed by these men, he returned to town, and flew to the Convent, where he accused me of being the cause of his daughter's absence, yet wondering at my imprudence in not having made my escape, and applauding himself for his sagacity. He now exhorted the whole community to join with him in prosecuting a villain who had polluted their sacred walls; and punish him as he deserved, by compelling him to an ample and striking reparation; adding that he would himself defray the expences of the law suit. To this scheme the Nuns readily contented; and M. d'Erlet immediately lodged a complaint in his own name and that of the whole community, against me.

During

During these transactions I remained in a dreadful state : my uncle never quitted me ; and my delirium still continued, tho' attended by less violent effects. I had indeed some intervals of reason ; but these being marked by an excess of anguish, redoubled my misery ; my haggard eyes rolled with unmeaning wildness ; and my soul, engrossed by its own gloomy ideas, thought no surrounding object worthy it's attention.

A stranger now coming to the door of M. de Merville, presented a letter to one of his people, and charging him to deliver it, immediately disappeared. My uncle having received and opened it, read as follows :

“ Regard for a respectable Magistrate, whose situation I pity, induces me to acquaint him with very interesting particulars : Julia is not to be found in her Con-
vent ;

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vent ; they are ignorant of her fate, but certain of her flight, and accuse your nephew of being the cause. They are in possession of proofs difficult to be evaded. M. d'Erlet calls loudly for his daughter ; and the religious community are distressed. I ought to have withheld this intelligence, and to have done my duty ; but your virtues and my friendship have extorted it from me. Take your measures ;—delay not a moment if M. de Floricourt be guilty.”

As M. de Merville (amazed and terrified at the contents of this letter) broke out into an exclamation of grief, I raised myself up in my bed, and looking at him with terror, cried out, my uncle ! Delighted at my recollection of him, he came to my bed-side, and shewed me the letter ; thinking it would give me pleasure to be informed of the strange event which had retarded the profession of Julia.

But

But it happened far otherwise ; this letter only adding new pangs to those which I already suffered : my strength forsook me, and I could only say that I had not taken away Julia, tho' I ardently wished to have done so. M. de Merville, after having brought me again to myself, hastened out, asking me no questions, being totally engrossed by reflection, and bent on taking the necessary steps for my safety and justification. My friend Vilson, to whose care he left me, had not yet dared to inform him of what had passed ; fearful of wounding the sensibility of an old man who adored me and esteemed Julia, whose unhappy fate must have plunged him into despair.

M. de Merville had but just quitted me, when some officers of justice, sent by M. d'Erlet, entered the house ; and tho' on coming to my apartment they found me in a dying condition, they insisted

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sisted on doing their duty. In vain did Vilson and the domestics oppose their inhumanity; in vain did they intreat, in vain did they urge them to defer their cruel purpose till the President's return; nothing could prevail against the liberal donations of my enemy, whose vengeance these men were resolved to execute. They tore me from my bed, wrapped me up in a mattrafs, and conveyed me into a dark prison, where they left me on some straw, and where, by dint of obstinacy and perseverance, Vilson and my physician followed me.

The moment my uncle was informed of what had happened, he flew to the place of my confinement, and on the goaler's shewing him his orders revoked them; the respect in which he was held, and his authority, justifying his procedure. He ordered me to be removed into a more commodious place; my miserable
condition

condition requiring both attention and succour ; and this being done, he flew to the judges who had given orders for my being arrested, desiring they would send me back to his house, where he pledged his honor they should find me. To this they would have readily consented, had not M. d'Erlet, trembling with rage, and exclaiming against injustice, insisted on my remaining in close confinement : they however remonstrated against my remaining in the dungeon in which I had been placed, urging that it must necessarily endanger my life. Tho' the hatred and rage of M. d'Erlet would have prompted him to let me remain there, as my death was what he wished for ; yet the hopes of preserving my life for a time, in order to see me end it shamefully on a scaffold, was the height of his ambition, and induced him to consent to a removal which prolonged my existence.

I remained

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I remained in prison a month, totally engrossed by the recollection of my misfortune, continually deploring what I had lost, accusing myself with being the cause, and filling the dismal place with lamentations. My uncle was with me incessantly; bewailing my condition, joining in my tears, and never quitting me but to solicit in my favor. His entreaties and exhortations at length forced a passage to my heart, an interval of reason suggesting to me what this generous old man suffered on my account. I saw him pale, dejected, and dismayed at my condition; felt all I owed him; accused myself of ingratitude; and resolved to make an effort to conceal my grief.

Do not forsake me my son! said he often. Do not I beseech you, rend from me the only consolation of my days! the only object that attaches me to life! Behold your uncle!—your father! who
has

has placed all his happiness in you, enfeebled by age and your misfortunes, languishing in bitterness of spirit. Can you consent to deprive him of life, by persisting in your affliction?—can you strike the blow that sends him to the grave? Be generous! be my friend! be my son!

This pathetic speech, this heart piercing language, at length brought me to myself. I trembled at what I had made him suffer; implored his forgiveness; promised to live; and to make him happy.

My affair nevertheless went on with unremitted attention. M. d'Erlet, who neglected nothing that was necessary for my condemnation, called loudly for his daughter; and all the researches made, only served to criminate me, on whom their suspicions fell. My uncle, though he trembled at interrogating me on the
subject,

subject, now found it absolutely necessary to do so; but with what care and caution did he ask me for a recital so dreadful to me, and yet so necessary for my safety. How did he sooth my heart by his gentleness; and what tenderness and affection did he shew me. He succeeded at last; and I related to him the fatal story. Far from oppressing me by entering into every minute particular of this horrible event, he passed slightly over the most distressing parts, endeavoured to support me under the pressure of the cruel recollection, and by a secret but a powerful art, consoled me. How few are there who in probing our wounds, do it with so tender an hand!—how few know how to avoid those two sensible parts, which cannot be touched without renewing our agonies!

Though M. de Merville shuddered at my recital, he would not add to my distress

tress by condemning the folly of my unhappy enterprize ; thinking the loss of Julia, and my consequent affliction, a sufficient punishment. I now again bitterly reproached myself with being the cause of the dreadful catastrophe. I have done all you predicted, my dear uncle ! exclaimed I. I have destroyed the life of her I adored, and have prepared her tomb !—what could the utmost hatred have done more ?

As M. de Merville now pressed me in his arms, wept over me, and compelled me to return his carresses, my grief was suspended ; and he now made me sensible how necessary it was to conceal every circumstance of this fatal story ; not on my own account, as I was careless of my safety, but on his ; his security and even his life depending on my silence. He knew my feelings ; he knew how much I loved him, and what a powerful influence

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ence gratitude had over me : he therefore pleaded not in vain ; I consented to all he asked ; and he retired to ruminate on the lights I had given him. He then consulted with Vilson, who informed him of the precautions he had taken to prevent all traces of this unjustifiable affair ; and they drew up a writing in which they set forth my situation the evening before the absence of Julia, and the improbability of my not immediately absconding had I been concerned in the affair ; as I should naturally be the first person suspected. This paper, which was presented by my uncle, contained excuses in my favor, and motives of defence ; but by no means invalidated the evidence of the men whom I had kept in readiness and paid.

I now grew better, and was soon to appear before the judges as a criminal ; one of whom came to question me in prison,

son, his followers attending to set down my answers; but all he could get from me was, that Julia was lost to me; that I wished to have carried her off, had my scheme been practicable; and that I bitterly regretted the impossibility of it. These answers by no means satisfying the judge, as they led to no elucidation, he asked me in a resolute tone of voice what was become of Julia? That I am ignorant of, answered I, tears rolling from my eyes in quick succession, and my assumed courage giving way to my feelings. I had on this occasion exerted all the springs of my soul, and had stretched every nerve to oblige my uncle; but I could now no longer sustain the painful conflict, my resolution opposed to my affliction being similar to a slight cord employed in raising a great weight, which being extended moves the weight and is broken; thus is every great effort of the soul attended by a consequent more terrible languor. The
judge

judge wished to question me further; but I fainted away, and he quitted me.

The merciless d'Erlet, ever inflamed by hatred and revenge, now desired I might be more closely confined; and it was thought necessary to grant his request as my accuser was the father of Julia. All appearances were now against me; the judges signed the order for my further confinement with tears of commiseration, and my uncle could scarce obtain permission to see me again. How many tears were shed by this good old man on the occasion. —how many times did he exhort me to persevere in my silence, and assure me his life depended on it. This was enough for me; I heard, and I obeyed. We were now obliged to part, by the entrance of those who were sent to separate us: we blended our tears, embraced each other, and my uncle departed in order to delay my judgment; flattering himself
that

that time and circumstance might produce some favourable change.

I passed eight days in my dungeon, engrossed by my melancholy reflections, torn to pieces by the idea of Julia and her untimely death, and fortified by the recollection of my uncle, whose life depended on mine. I was at length sent for, was loaded with chains, and conducted to the criminal chamber. My judges were assembled, and I appeared on the sellette* before magistrates with whom I had a right to sit. While I trembled at my humiliation, they read me the long accusations of M. d'Erlet, to which I made no answer, and the President thus addressed me——

* Sellette, a seat on which criminals are placed. To be seated on which answers to our idea of being put to the bar.

“ You are not ignorant of our duty and ought to know your own. Do you love Julia d’Erlet? Do I love her! exclaimed I; alas my passion is too well known by my misfortunes! and honours me too much to be denied! Have you not taken steps—many steps to obtain her? You know the result, answered I; how many agonies, how many torments, would her barbarous father have spared me had he consented to our union. Julia would have been happy; I should have been happy; and he would have been happy himself. Sobs and tears now stopt my utterance, the loss I had sustained presenting itself to my mind in all its horrors. O Heavens! O Heavens! exclaimed I at last; of what felicity am I deprived! O death! thou art my only hope!

You have carried her off, continued the judge. Would to God I had! exclaimed I; but alas!—What answer do you give to
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the proofs alledged against you? continued he; what do you say to the depositions of those men you had hired? what use did you intend to make of the horses and boat you kept in readiness? I remained silent.

The boatmen, who were now called for, and interrogated before me, confessed I had hired them. Did you know whether the boat was intended for his own use? said the President. We know nothing of that, answered the men, as we were paid before hand. What did you mean to do with the boat? said the Judge, addressing himself to me. The idea of my project, and the happy effects I had promised myself from its success, now striking my imagination, I put forth a cry of anguish, and exclaimed just Heaven! The Judge repeated his question.

My scheme was, answered I, to convey Julia far from her barbarous oppressors,

and to preserve her from a cruel sacrifice; a sacrifice equally culpable in her inhuman father, and the community which gave it sanction, her disgust and aversion to the state being well known, as she had strongly resisted all the seductive arts of the nuns. You were all witnesses of my agonies and her despair at her assuming the habit; her heart disavowing what her tongue was compelled to utter; I followed the dictates of humanity—I followed the inspiration of Heaven, which accepts not of compulsive sacrifices. I thought M. d'Erlet had forfeited the rights of a father by his cruelty and oppression; I thought Julia ought to assume her own, and shake off her subjection to a tyrant. You have all condemned her father's conduct—his cruelty—his inhumanity!—do the laws justify barbarians?—do they protect fathers like M. d'Erlet?—O you who are the arbitrators of justice! pronounce according
to

to your feelings ! I see you pity me ! I see you condemn the cruel man who has persecuted me ! On the point of losing Julia for ever, is there one among you who would not have advised me to prevent her loss ? I had formed an happy scheme !—but alas ! I could not put it into execution !

But where is Julia, who is not now to be found, reiterated the judge ? She promised me, answered I, that nothing but death should separate her from me—Julia is lost to me—she is lost to all the world—death perhaps.—Ah judge of my innocence by my tears—my anguish ! the intention cannot surely be punishable before man ! But nobody nevertheless knows what is become of Julia, said my judges : you are accused ; and you can only be so : you confess you wished to carry her off ; and you must produce her again. Would to God I could do so ! exclaimed I.

The judges now entering into consultation, I retired with the witnesses, and returned lone, when the President thus addressed me ; “ We are unanimous in our opinions—your offence is of a very serious nature ; nothing but your confession being wanting to prove your crime. You are condemned by the laws, and cannot be ignorant of the methods made use of by tribunals of justice to extort confession from the guilty, and those who would conceal the truth. We ought at this moment perhaps to apply the torture ; but we are affected by your misfortunes, and give you time to reflect ; we cannot forget your having once been among us, and feel a great repugnance at condemning a brother magistrate, and former friend : reflect Floricourt ; reflect that your silence augments your crime.” Saying these words he rang the bell, and I was immediately conveyed to the dungeon reserved for those criminals who
were

were destined to the torture. In this place I remained many days, reflecting on my misfortunes, shuddering at the tortures with which I was threatened, and the ignominy to which I was exposed, though quite unconcerned about my life. I was every evening visited by one of the judges, who exhorted me to a confession, which I constantly refused. In fine, said one of them to me at last, after many fruitless endeavours to move me, this is the last time I shall exhort you; the patience and forbearance of the judges is exhausted; prepare yourself for those cruel tortures which we tremble at, but which we cannot help inflicting on the guilty.

As the habit of misfortune had rendered me callous, I was not in the least affected by this speech, and I now longed with a secret impatience for those tortures which were to put a period to my life.

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I remained

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I remained the rest of the day and the following night in this stupid kind of tranquillity; but as a profound stillness reigned around me great part of the ensuing day, I began to recollect myself; prepared for the fatal moment; and yet trembled at the tortures which were to be inflicted on me: all my fortitude forsook me when I heard the bolts of my prison door open, and a tear rolled down my cheeks; wretch! said I mentally on the instant, dost thou then tremble at rejoining Julia! My resolution now returned; I armed myself against the fatal stroke, and looked with firmness towards the door of the dungeon. The goaler now entered, and informed me that I should pass this day free from pain; a circumstance that gave me pleasure, as I wished for more time to strengthen my resolution. I passed the night in endeavours to fortify myself against the fatal tortures; but was the next day taken back to my former prison.

prison. As I was astonished at this new change, I asked the cause of it, and was informed by my goaler that my affairs had taken a favorable turn, though he was not at liberty to enter into particulars, as silence was an essential part of his duty.

After I had exhausted myself in vain conjectures, my judges came to my prison in the evening, accompanied by my uncle. Be free! said they, taking off my chains; your innocence is manifest, and we are convinced. We will repair the injustice we were compelled to do you, and will avenge your cause—you shall reassume your place among us; you shall be happy, beloved, and justified, and shall still aid us by your counsels; saying this, they conducted me to my uncle's coach.

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I was astonished at this unexpected change; and eagerly asked by what strange event my liberty was restored? M. de Merville embraced me; and the magistrates who accompanied him were profuse in their concessions; making me a thousand apologies for their conduct, and assuring me they were compelled to silence by my uncle, who had reserved to himself the pleasure of informing me of all that had happened, lest the recital of circumstances so painful to me might renew all my grief. I was conducted home in triumph by my judges and had the satisfaction of hearing myself applauded by surrounding multitudes, who congratulated me on the occasion, and thanked Heaven for delivering an innocent man on the point of destruction from the sword of law.

The moment I was alone with M. de Merville I asked with impatience how he
had

had obtained my liberty? he now approached and pressed me in his arms, but remained silent for some time, his joy being too great for his utterance. I was however at last informed of the following particulars.

The evening preceeding the day on which the tortures were to have been applied to me, and the very evening on which the judge had announced them to me, an old nun and companion of Julia's, who had been long ill, died; the gardener, who had been of so much service to me, followed by four men, had lifted the stone which covered the tomb, had descended with the nuns, and found Julia at the bottom of the stone stair case which led to it (in the habit of a novice) as Vilson had placed her; the four months she had been there, owing to the coldness of the vaults, having scarce altered her features.

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features. While the nuns screamed at the sight of her, Valain threw himself on the body of his benefactress, and by his tears and lamentations made her known to her companions.

Vilson, ever attentive to what passed in the convent, and knowing of what consequence such an event must be to me, failed not to be in the outward choir: he approached the grate, and calling others, demanded the cause of the cries he heard; when some females, who were terrified, and were hastening up stairs, informed him that Julia was found in the tomb. Of this news he immediately informed my uncle, who had waited with impatience for some happy turn, and who had already assembled the proper number of magistrates under the pretext of imploring their lenity. He now flew with them to the convent; and affecting profound astonishment,

ment, arrived at the same moment with M. d'Erlet, whom he had sent to seek. Being convinced of the necessity of dissembling on this occasion, he addressed him thus ; your daughter is then found, said he, (in a firm and resolute tone of voice) she is still in the convent, it seems ; and while you confine her here, you accuse the innocent Floricourt, who now languishes in a dungeon !

The exasperated d'Erlet now wanted to enter the convent immediately ; but was prevented by the magistrates, who had the nuns interrogated, and commanded them to speak the truth. Their depositions, which were taken down in writing, were signified ; and M. d'Erlet, confounded by rage and disappointment, exclaimed with vehemence, that his daughter was dead, and that M. de Merville's nephew had assassinated her, and had contrived to throw her over the walls.

You

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You are mistaken Sir, cried the nuns with one voice; we have found her in the tomb.

The magistrates now visited the corps in order to ascertain its identity; and setting their seal, expressed their suspicions of the barbarity of M. d'Erlet, and that of the nuns, who were doubtless his accomplices. They then examined the vaults; had skilful architects called in; and discovering no other outlet than that of the choir and woodhouse, the interior being invisible, darted a look of indignation at M. d'Erlet that made him tremble; and giving orders for my enlargement, retired.

This strange event being published throughout the Town, each individual explained it his own way. Some were of opinion that Julia had in despair destroyed herself; and others that she had been
poisoned

poisoned by her father, who had vowed vengeance against her; while the cruel d'Erlet, terrified at their conjectures, kept a profound silence.

My uncle was now urged to pursue M. d'Erlet as a criminal; but being well acquainted with the truth, he excused himself by saying that he thought nobody guilty of Julia's death; adding, he was by no means disposed to investigate secrets of such a nature, or seek an unjust revenge: he therefore contented himself with writing M. d'Erlet a letter, in which he told him he meant not to enter into the irksome particulars of this horrid affair, or to upbraid him for his conduct, but only to urge him to repentance, and to assure him of his forgiveness and mine.

The parliament, who thought proper to take cognizance of this affair, commenced a process at law against the Religious

gious Community, d'Erlet, and his daughter; but the interest of M. de Merville suspended it for a time; and d'Erlet, who understood nothing of these affairs, and thought they might be productive of trouble, annihilated it by the power of gold; being only obliged to ask my pardon for his insults and the indignities he had offered me. How did his heart burn at this concession! He was still the same man, and his hatred seemed to have acquired new strength. How gladly would he have given half what he possessed to be excused from this humiliation, or that it had succeeded my tortures! I could not behold him again without an agonizing groan: I turned away my eyes, and was on the point of loading him with reproaches, when my uncle, who convinced me of the necessity of my doing my duty, and of the perilous situation I was in, restrained me. We however spared him the mortification he dreaded,
and

and wept at the untimely death of Julia without making the least impression on him : he remained inflexible ; and quitted us more enraged than ever.

My grief and agitation nevertheless still continued, though their effects were less violent : I felt them ever at my heart, and often surprized myself in tears. I wished to be alone ; could not shake off my sadness, delighted in solitude ; and indulged my melancholy reflections. My uncle, who perceived the state of my mind, endeavoured at first to divert me ; but finding that impossible, he gave a free scope to my affliction, convinced that my sorrows must subside of themselves. Nothing now amused me, or diverted my chagrin ; all my duties as a magistrate became hateful to me ; and the sole desire of obliging my uncle induced me to continue them.

The

The vacation being come, I prevailed on M. de Merville to return to his country house, where I had become the vassal of love, and where I had laid the foundation of all my misfortunes. I plunged into the woods, uttered the most heart piercing groans, and wished for death to relieve me. I often visited the old peasant, talked with him about Julia, dwelt with delight on her goodness of heart, and joined with him in deploring her loss; I then returned home more afflicted than ever, and broke into transports nearly allied to madness.

I did my utmost to conceal my feelings from my uncle, affected a more tranquil air in his presence, and confined my pangs to my own breast; when he perceived my efforts he shed tears, and I followed his example; do not conceal your grief said he, let your tears flow, Julia is worthy of them, and they relieve your heart;
be

be under no constraint before me, you know I am your friend : Oh, Floricourt ! how are my days imbittered with anguish ! I flattered myself I could have made you happy, but heaven opposes my design, for I see you plunged into despair ! At these words I forgot myself, wiped away my tears, flew into his arms, and assured him I would live to prove his consolation. He embraced me tenderly, and we parted :

I now took better care to conceal my feelings ; I restrained my tears, suppressed my anguish, rejoiced in the midst of grief, and forgot myself in order to make my benefactor happy. Vilson, who had suspended his chimerical operations during my distresses and confinement, accompanied me to my uncle's seat, where my heart being torn by the consciousness of having so greatly afflicted him, I endeavoured to conceal my feelings even before him, and wished to accustom myself
to

to this painful effort. Vilson, who was deceived by my apparent composure, thinking he ought to felicitate me on the victory I had gained over my sorrows, congratulated me ; but I attended to him in silence, and burst into a flood of tears.

Oh ! Vilson exclaimed I, are you likewise deceived ! you who ought to know all the secret springs of my soul, and all their effects on my body ! do you not see the inward anguish which destroys me ? do you not read in my looks what passes in my heart ? Julia ! can I ever forget her ! she who is ever present to my imagination ; she who will for ever reign in my heart ! happiness was in my view—but——Oh Floricourt ! Oh my friend ! cried Vilson, my imprudence has renewed your grief, and opened all your wounds : pardon my indiscretion, and still endeavour to conceal your grief ; let not your uncle, let not that respectable old man discover

discover your feelings; consider his age, consider the tender sensibility of his nature, and deprive him not of the pleasing hope of thinking you are happy.

This was my own resolution: It was my duty. I assumed an air of tranquility while with my uncle, and unbosomed myself to Vilson: I felt a painful pleasure in making my sufferings known to him, and freely indulged my sobs, tears, and lamentations before him; the constraint I had so long imposed on myself, having raised a tempest in my soul which friendship only could appease.

Thus did I pass my time while in the country, engrossed by my afflictions, and endeavouring to conceal them: I roved about, visited every place where I had seen Julia, and stopt with a melancholy delight where I had declared my passion to her, where she had fallen fainting into
my

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my arms, and had made a confession which for a moment constituted my felicity. I still enjoyed the pleasing recollection, ran to every place where I had seen her, and could hardly tear myself away.

I again visited those who had been relieved by Julia's bounty, and saw them melted into tears at her name: it is I who have deprived you of her, (exclaimed I) it is I who have robbed you of her assistance! my fatal passion has constituted the infelicity of the most perfect object! yet was it possible to see and not to love her? and did it necessarily follow that my love should prove her bane? I wept with these honest beings, and felt a satisfaction with them I was a stranger to elsewhere. If I have been the fatal cause of your losing a benefactress, cried I, you shall find her revive in me. I adored Julia, was beloved by her, and have imbibed
her

her sentiments : she pitied and relieved you, and I will do the same.

It was thus that this pure immaculate remembrance, this immortal flame, inspired me with a taste for the most essential of all duties, humanity ! I blushed at not having felt this principle before, at having stood in need of Julia's example, and at being only her imitator.

While I was conveying peace and happiness into the bosoms of these indigent families, my heart overflowed with joy. Julia sees me, cried I ; she sees me from the height of heaven, and applauds a conduct which renders me less unworthy of the love she bore me ; she raises me in a degree to her own perfection, and smiles with celestial sweetness at my remembrance of her, and at my imitation of her virtues !

This

This pleasing idea cheered my soul and heated my imagination. I heard my praises echoed by all those who had so often commended Julia, and heard them with delight! what pity is it, said they at last, that Julia is no more, and that she could not be united to Floricourt! This regret soothed me for the moment—but soon did the cruel recollection of all that had passed return to my mind in all its horrors—when sighs—sobs—and bitter tears succeeded each other with convulsive agonies, and the illusion vanished! I now saw nothing but reality—felt that Julia was lost to me for ever—and retired in an agony of grief. It was not till I came within sight of M. de Merville's château that reason resumed her sway, and induced me to compose my outward appearance. This respectable magistrate examined my eyes the moment I entered, and as I had done my utmost to gain a mastery over my looks, he embraced me tenderly,

tenderly, and called me by the most endearing names; in fine, if the kindness, tenderness, and affection of M. de Merville could not always banish my painful reflections, they compelled me to conceal them.

After having passed two months in this manner in the country, we returned to town, where I reassumed the duties of my function with that avidity and ardour which springs from an heart ill at ease, torn by affliction, broken by disappointment, and eager in the pursuit of something to divert its anguish. This happy change delighted my uncle; but the darts of misfortune were not yet exhausted; another misfortune equally terrible was to lessen my grief by engaging my attention, and by presenting me with new objects of distress: this is ever the fate of human beings who require great strokes of af-

fiction to efface the first deep impressions made on their hearts.

Too much engrossed by my loss to think of dissipation of any sort, I lived a retired life, and applied myself to study with the utmost diligence in order one day to become a real magistrate. I trembled at the rage for law-suits, which inflamed three fourths of mankind against each other, and sought for a degree of intelligence that would enable me to do justice to all men, to distinguish a just from an unjust claim, and to discover truth through the dark clouds with which chicanery had surrounded it. I took the utmost care to arm myself against the errors of imagination, which decorate injustice with the deceitful semblance of equity; and assisted by my uncle studied our numberless laws and customs. I was grieved to find a defect of form authorize an unjust decree, and exerted all my zeal
to

to prevent it : but that which afflicted me most, was the necessity I lay under of sometimes judging criminals who deserved to die, and of giving my assent to their death with other magistrates. When I felt the necessity of tortures to intimidate the multitude ; I redoubled my efforts, consulted men of genius, and critically examined the various circumstances of offence punishable by the laws, though not properly discriminated, thinking (as I was inclined to mercy and was one of the expounders of the laws) I might in some cases mitigate the punishments to be inflicted.

A murder committed in the vicinity of the town in which we lived, convinced me of the necessity of paying due attention to things of this nature : the assassin was not taken in the fact, but arrested for mutilating, with rage, hatred and fury, the corpse of him he had murdered.

He was conveyed to prison! and my uncle and I were in the number of those judges who were to decide his fate.

We assembled:—the prisoner was brought before us, covered with dirt and blood, and I thought I could, through this ghastly appearance, discover a noble and distinguished mien.

The criminal, loaded with irons, his hair dishevelled, his head bent down and turned from us, kept a profound silence, and when the depositions of the witnesses against him were read, fetched a deep sigh but said nothing. My uncle having questioned him with regard to the nature and circumstances of his crime, he turned his head towards him, looked at him for sometime with attention, and then again turning away his head, seemed to shed tears, and was silent.

Every

Every thing proves you to be a murderer, said the magistrate; you have shewn a barbarous nature in mutilating an assassinated body in an unheard of manner. Are you guilty? Yes! replied the prisoner; but am no vile assassin; I fought with the wretch and killed him, for he had dishonoured me; but I gave him leave to defend himself. My rage however was not satisfied—I wished to deprive the monster I have punished of a thousand lives had he possessed them, and repent that I did not treat him still worse! O you before whom I stand! you cannot be ignorant of the value of honour, or to what a degree we ought to resent an outrage! you cannot be ignorant of the necessity of vengeance to an exasperated soul!—a soul that is a stranger to peace till its revenge is satisfied!

We shuddered at what he said! his air—his tone of voice—and the ferocious

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firmness with which he spoke inspiring us with a kind of horror. What can have occasioned this atrocious conduct? said the judges; and who are you? the prisoner having kept silence for some time, at last spoke as follows:

“ I have already told you the motive of my conduct. My motive was revenge! your laws may perhaps condemn me—but I submit to my fate, and the torments prepared for me by men, who had they been in my situation would have acted just as I did. As for my name, that you shall never know; for I will carry that fatal secret with me to the grave; my ignominious death on the scaffold inspires me with no horror, since my family cannot be dishonoured by it, myself being unknown. This is all I have to say—pronounce my doom!—appoint my tortures!—I see them in cold blood; and look on the death which is to be their termination

termination as a sovereign balm—a balm
my soul pants after !

The horror with which he had at first inspired us now gave place to commiseration and pity, while his resolution excited our respect. He was again interrogated ; but neither menaces, nor the most terrifying representations of his tortures, could shake his resolution or induce him to discover who he was ; all that he could be prevailed upon to utter being a few circumstances relative to his history and his crime.

“ You shall be made acquainted,” said he, “ with those particulars which have been the immediate cause of my falling into this abyfs.”—Noble blood runs in my veins, and has only been dishonoured by the errors of youth and the effects of the passions ; blood that will remain uncontaminated though I die on a scaffold.

D 4

“ Unhappy

“ Unhappy in the bosom of my country, and forced against my will to break through the strong ties which held me there, I led a life of dishonour and libertinism; soured by poverty, and rejected by the whole world, at an age when the passions ought to have been less impetuous, and after having passed twenty years in their full indulgence, I became acquainted with Rosina. Few women were so handsome, and fewer so perfidious; the artifice and falshood which had tarnished her soul seeming in my eyes to have given new lustre to her features. Her heart proved not insensible to the impressions of love, and I had the satisfaction of becoming the object of her affections. Fatigued with my course of life, detesting my errors, and still a slave to them, I loved virtue in others, and most in Rosina. I told her who I was; and as her birth was inferior to mine, she was ambitious of bearing

bearing my name, and of partaking the riches I was one day to possess. A priest was prevailed on to marry us privately, and possession augmented my love; the caresses of Rosina now constituted my felicity, and a child she brought into the world a few years after our marriage added to my joy.

“ Being then at Paris, I had no other resource than that of play, in which I was at first successful; but fortune becoming my enemy, soon gave me proofs of her inconstancy; I lost all I had woon, and having no other resource to supply my daily wants, soon grew thoughtful and melancholy. Rosina by her caresses and entreaties prevailed on me to acquaint her with my situation, and seemed regardless of it; neither upbraiding me or deploring her own fate: she even exhorted me to patience, and

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flattered me with the hopes of better fortune.

“ Urged by the desire of repairing my losses, and taking advantage of Rosina’s absence, I one day seized her jewels, ran to the gaming table, and returned with vexation and disappointment in my heart at having been deprived of this last stake. The first object which presented itself to me on my entrance was my unfortunate son. Mamma is not at home, cried he ; give me some bread for I am hungry. . These words pierced me to the soul. Great God ! exclaimed I, my misfortunes are at their height, I shall soon behold this poor child—this innocent victim of his father’s ill conduct, perish for want ! unfortunate babe ! cried I, pressing him to my bosom and bathing him with my tears, while he, though insensible of his own situation, seemed to weep

weep with me and redoubled my affection.

“ I remained the rest of the day in a state of tumult and disorder, anxiously expecting yet fearing to see Rosina. She however came not. I passed the night with inexpressible anguish, and the next day received a letter from her, which I opened with precipitation. As she in this letter bid me an everlasting adieu it threw me into the utmost agitation. I raved like a madman—quitted my habitation—and ran about without knowing where I went. Chance however directed me at length to a remote street, where I perceived a servant in the livery of my best friend, the Chevalier de ———, standing at a door. I entered the house, in order to communicate my affliction to him—flew into the first apartment I met with, and could distinguish the voice of Rosina and that of the Chevalier. They are together then,
said

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said I mentally, and are talking about me; but being seized by a sudden inquietude, I stopped, and applying my ear to the door, heard the particulars of an horrid plot. Rosina I found had been long treacherous to me; my friend was her accomplice; and they felicitated each other on having got rid of me. A silence now succeeding, I listened again—and opening the door with fury, discovered the baseness of the guilty Rosina, and my dishonour.

“ Rage and grief having fixed me in an immovable posture, the Chevalier escaped; and Rosina, terrified at her situation, fell senseless. I pierced her with a thousand wounds; and finding on her those jewels I had lost at play, and which the Chevalier had doubtless robbed me of, I stripped her of them and flew to my own house, took my child in my arms, and quitted the fatal place. As I was not pursued, I re-
tired

tired to a distant province, where I settled; and where disguising my name, I passed my time in the painful recollection of what had happened, and in regretting the loss of the faithless Rosina, whose memory I still loved.

“ In fine, being obliged a few days since to take a journey, I met my perfidious friend in a retired place, and doubting the testimony of my sight, approached him, when finding him the identical traitor, I loaded him with invectives, exclaiming barbarian defend thyself! He endeavoured to escape, but I stopped him, and holding a pistol to his breast, urged him to dismount while I quitted my own horse. The wretch taking advantage of this moment, turned the bridle of his horse, and fired a pistol at me. I could now no longer command myself; I returned the salute with one of mine, struck his horse, which immediately fell, and grasping my sword,

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sword, compelled him to use his own; but his coward heart weakening his arm, while rage and fury strengthened mine, I wounded him mortally and he died. Not satisfied with his death, my rage still burning against him, I plunged my sword repeatedly into his breast, mutilated a body which could no longer feel the effects of my resentment, and forgetting my own safety while I gratified my revenge, I was surprized, criminated, and conveyed to a dungeon."

Though we were struck and softened by this recital (the crimes of the prisoner seeming rather the effects of a strange concatenation of unfortunate events than of premeditated malice) we could not avoid condemning him; for had he a right to avenge himself? and could we as magistrates, and the expounders of the laws, fail in our duty? The prisoner had confessed two crimes instead of one; and
it

it was besides necessary to oblige him to declare his name and country. We could however obtain no answer from him ; and he remained unmoved by the tortures with which he was threatened—that of the wheel not intimidating him. The tortures were already prepared, when I obtained a suspension of them, M. de Merville seconding me. We visited him together several times in prison, interrogating him on the subject of his confinement, and were sometimes conducted into an hall appropriated to formalities of this nature, where my uncle exhausted all his eloquence to induce him to speak.

Tired and worn out at length by this sort of persecution, the prisoner one day broke out into these words ; “ you are then resolved (said he to M. de Merville, with violent emotion) not to spare me the mortification of confessing who I am.

’Tis

'Tis well!—but you alone need hear me—
as I have only a few words to say.

I was now going to retire; but my
uncle stopped me, saying to the prisoner,
“you may speak before my nephew.”

The prisoner now looked at me for
time with a gloomy aspect, and then dart-
ing a glance at us both, which made
even M. de Merville tremble, cast down
his eyes and rested his head on his breast.
It is then absolutely necessary, said he
after a long pause, that I should acquaint
you with my name; that I should not
carry this secret with me to the grave; you
insist on my casting this odium on my fa-
mily; a family that richly deserves this
chastisement for having been the cause of
my falling in those vices which have
brought me into my present situation. I
owe myself this vengeance, added he, and
may my ignominious death prove a lesson
to

to all cruel, fathers ! Look at me, M. de Merville ; look at me and tremble ! for I am your son ! a son whom you abandoned to gratify the caprices of a step-mother ! a son who, soured and disgusted by the treatment he met with in his paternal mansion, fled far from you, and gave himself up to those shameful practices, which have at length conducted him to a scaffold, and the time of his execution now only depends upon you !

The President, amazed and thunder-struck at this address, put forth a cry of anguish. Thou my son !—wretch that thou art ! said he, trembling while he surveyed him ; can this be possible ? Yes ! replied the criminal, it is very possible ; and you in vain pretend not to know me ! I am indeed your son—and should have been virtuous—should have proved the staff of your old age—had you willed it so ! But I now cover you with shame, instead
of

of proving a comfort to you, and you have only yourself to blame!

M. de Merville, scarce able to stand, and leaning on me, looked at the prisoner with terror, and being no longer able to conceal a truth which cut him to the soul, exclaimed, can it be possible that my son should appear before me in such a state of guilt and horror! Wretch!—cruel wretch!—how hast thou defiled thyself with blood! 'Tis blood I ought to have shed, replied the prisoner, and I glory in having avenged myself on a traitor! But cease your reproaches, President! added he; the criminality in which I stand before you admits not of them—You were once my father—but you are now my judge, and your lessons are out of season. As you think me guilty, and are at the head of the laws, reflect, and strike—it is the last blow you can give me, and I wait for it with less terror than impatience,

tience, as it will procure me that repose which I have long been a stranger to.— You were determined to know who I was, and you are now satisfied.

Oh God! Oh God! cried the President, almost stifled by tears and sobs, to what a trial hast thou brought me this day! Oh my son! my son! I am then still your son! interrupted the prisoner, and your affection breaks out at last! Cruel father!—your tenderness ought to have been shown to me during the fury and persecution of a mother in law, whose cruelty you authorized! how often have I fallen at your feet—how often have I sought redress from you—and wished to take shelter in your parental bosom!— But you rejected me then—and tremble now! I formerly trembled too at your unkindness, and retired from you full of bitterness and anguish, though I was constrained to conceal my feelings in your presence

presence to prevent your cruel reproaches and ill treatment. All I then did to move you was in vain. I became hateful to you.—You rejected me with scorn—I fled from you—and should never have seen you more had not this fatal moment compelled me to appear before you.—Look at me therefore, and rejoice in the work of your own hands !

Astonished at what I heard, and the object before me, I trembled from head to foot, while I sustained the President, who, pale, half dying, and lost to his former firmness, gazed at his son loaded with irons and seated on the sellette, his eyes generally bent on the ground, but sometimes raised with fury, while his livid forehead expressed that ferocity of disposition which could alone render him an unmoved spectator of our grief.

Oh

Oh my son! exclaimed the afflicted M. de Merville, overwhelm not thus your unfortunate father, who owns he has done wrong, since nature has amply avenged your cause—and punished me!

I now saw an immediate change in the prisoner's aspect: he raised his eyes, which had now lost all their ferocity, and fixing them on the President, shed tears, while a sigh escaped him. This repentance, said he after a long pause, comes rather too late: a terrible lesson this to fathers!—You see the state to which you have reduced me!—I wait for death with eager expectation; and only wished to conceal my birth to save you from dishonour, and from the shame that must attend my exit. As you insisted on knowing my name, I declared it from a motive of revenge; from a desire to make you feel remorse, and to punish your indiscreet curiosity: but I now re-
pent

pent having done so, for I am no savage.—If your insensibility at first banished nature from my breast, your tears and present situation recall her to my heart, and convince me that my unhappiness proceeded solely from your tenderness to a wife you fondly loved : And who can be ignorant of the power of love !—who can be ignorant of the power of a woman, who blending caresses with tears, takes the soul captive, and subjects it to the power of the senses.—Regret and compunction may follow, but how soon are they dissipated by the blandishments of an artful woman ! she reigns despotic—obtains all she asks—and subjects her husband to her laws, as I have often experienced ! This is enough, Sir, continued he, addressing himself to me—I can no longer sustain this scene—take care of my father—and order me to be reconducted to my dungeon. I wished to be revenged ; but my vengeance re-
volts

volts on myself; and I now tremble at what I have done. The tortures with which I am threatened make me shudder; hasten their application I beseech you, while I have any firmness left, and take from me the burthen of my existence: this favour I implore and expect from you, and should you ever become a father tremble at this lesson.

I had kept a profound silence during the whole of this terrible scene; nor did it require less than this dreadful event to dispel my grief and awaken my faculties, which lay dormant in the contemplation of my own misfortunes. Forceably struck by the present situation of my benefactor and that of his son, I now for the first time ceased to think of Julia; and totally engrossed by their concerns, revolved a thousand schemes in my mind without being able to explain them.

Conceal

Conceal the fatal secret you have intrusted us with said I one moment, to M. de Merville junior, and then addressing myself to my uncle, reassume your courage, Sir—all is not yet lost—let nobody be informed of what has just past : and then again turning to the prisoner, persist in refusing to make known your birth—do not be intimidated by menaces—the last extremity may be put off, and perhaps—What is it you say, interrupted the President ; forbare giving me false hopes I beseech you ; the tortures may be delayed 'tis true, but nothing can prevent their application at last. Deceive not yourself, my son, said he turning to the culprit, the laws speak plainly ; and whatever be my feelings as a father, the laws must be obeyed. You must therefore arm yourself with courage ; you must submit to your sentence, and suffer according to the laws. This however militates not against my
desire

desire of having your name concealed; but this must rest with you; it must depend on your affection for a father who has treated you with injustice. As to your being saved through the lenity of a father, think not of it my son; a breaking heart—bitter tears—and anguish—being all I have to offer—And all I have to ask, rejoined the prisoner;—I am prepared for all that is to come, and long to put an end to this irksome conversation. I find my father again just as I am about to quit the world,—and, oh bitterness!—oh infamy!—in what a way am I to quit it!—But let us turn from these fatal ideas, for 'tis now in vain to soften each other; reassume your fortitude, said he to my uncle, for I am about to set you the example, and only desire you will take care of my son.

M. de Merville now embraced and wept over his son, and then returning to

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his feat, called for his attendants and ordered the criminal to be reconducted to prison.

As I was to attend the rest of the judges alone, in order to give them account, I concealed the dreadful scene I had been witness to, and described the prisoner as an object of pity and commiseration, saying his crime was only the effect of an exasperated soul, deeply and cruelly injured; a soul determined on revenge and lost to reflection; in consequence of which I prevailed on them to withdraw him from his former dungeon, and grant him the same privileges as other prisoners; when being more at liberty, and less alone, he might be brought to reason; lenient measures being often more efficacious than severe ones.

As they had no suspicion of my motive, (which was in reality to save the unhappy

unhappy man) my advice was followed in all things; and I was convinced that by having permission to walk in the court belonging to the prison it would be much easier to effect his escape, than while he was confined to a dungeon, from which it would have been impossible to rescue him, as I must have then made application to the goaler who kept the keys, and have bribed him to an act which I wished to conceal from all the world my having any hand in, being fearful of exposing myself. I indeed felt some remorse at acting so very contrary to my oaths; but when I reflected that my uncle—my benefactor—was in a dying condition owing to the situation of his son, I forgot all compunction, and thought even the guilt of that son excusable.

When I returned home I eagerly inquired after M. de Merville, and found this worthy magistrate, who was unable

to resist the fatal stroke which had been given him, put to bed in a high fever. I immediately flew to his bed side, which I never quitted the whole night, and could not help reflecting that I now occupied the place at his bed-side which he had lately done at mine. Alas! said I, how little did I expect to return the favor in so short a space of time—how little did I think M. de Merville would stand in need of my consolation! But I wanted this storm—this terrible event—to banish the remembrance of Julia!—the present evil swallowing up the past.

My dear nephew! said M. de Merville to me the next morning, I have but a few days to live, and how are those days embittered! The career of my life has been long and peaceable, but the end of it is anguish! Your grief of heart has wounded me very deeply, and the guilt of my son destroys me. I have chosen
you

you as the staff of my age, and you shall close my eyes, for I never can outlive the condemnation of my son.

How, Sir ! said I (endeavouring to comfort him) will you then sink into despair before you need to do so?—will you renounce all hopes when hopes present themselves? Your illness is a sufficient excuse for deferring the sentence to be passed on your son, and the intermediate time may be employed in obtaining his release; nature authorizes the deed, and gratitude compels me to be his deliverer; he shall live—he shall quit his prison—and shall escape!

M. de Merville, now fixing his eyes upon me with a dejected countenance, and raising his voice, spoke thus—If you have dared to form a scheme like this, Floricourt ! said he, I charge you to renounce it—though God is my witness

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how much I should rejoice in the delivery of my son! What! shall an unfortunate wretch who wants friends to support him fall a victim to the laws of his country, while a man convicted of equal crimes shall escape because he is related to me? No! and if your compassion for me has induced you to forget your duty, it is mine to remind you of it!

Astonished at this speech, I gazed at my uncle with admiration. What father but this, said I, could have assumed such firmness, or shown such an inflexible attachment to justice! Noble magistrate! thou wilt ever prove a model to all future judges, but wilt have few imitators!

He could not however convince me of being wrong; an invincible impulse compelling me to persevere in serving him; I therefore dropt the subject, and
determined

determined never to mention his son to him again till he was set at liberty.

I now took advantage of the first sleep M. de Merville had fallen into, and retired in order to reflect on what I had to do and how I was to act in this critical situation. Had resolution alone been requisite, my zeal would have easily supplied me with means to bring about what I wished; but that was not the case; how was I therefore to begin? by what method was I to deliver the son of my benefactor? I was but imperfectly acquainted with the places of confinement, my abode in prison not having furnished me with an opportunity of examining the interior parts of them, as my affliction when there prevented my paying any attention to surrounding objects, or even to my own life; neither could I now visit these melancholy abodes, as I had no pretext for so doing; and ought in

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prudence to avoid them, lest my taking such a step should render me suspected.

While I was with the utmost inquietude ruminating on this subject, I was drawn by a mechanical impulse towards the house of a lady advanced in years, eminent for piety and for daily acts of secret charity. I found her in plain apparel, her face almost hid by a close cap, and on the point of going out, attended by her woman. As I immediately concluded she was about to pay some charitable visit, impelled by her well known zeal, I fancied she was going to the relief of the prisoners, and was immediately about to open my mind to her, when a new idea struck me; "Having been lately a prisoner myself, Madam, said I, and having long languished in those uncomfortable abodes, I have learned to pity the fate of those who inhabit them, and ardently wish to convey some friendly

ly assistance to them in person, though I would if possible remain unknown.

As this project seemed highly commendable and truly praise worthy in the eyes of the pious matron, she cast about for some means of disguising me; and at last made me assume the habit of her woman, almost covered my face with a large cap, and bid me follow her.

On our arrival at the prison, I for the first time observed the gloomy horrors of the place, counted the doors which the goaler opened and shut after us, and trembled at their number and thickness. We passed through five of these before we reached the courts; and all around were dungeons under ground, over which there were rooms erected less dismal but equally inaccessible. The first were designed for those criminals who were confined for capital crimes; and the last for

less notorious offenders, who had the privilege of looking through grated windows; but as a thousand eyes were continually turned towards them what hopes could they form of escape?

I examined all those who were walking, but could not discover M. de Merville among them; who would not, it seems, make use of the privilege granted him. After we had bestowed our charitable donations, we descended into the dungeons, and were at length conducted into that which most interested me. We entered it through a sort of gallery, which terminated in three small vaults which we were obliged to cross.

All I saw added to my affliction, as I perceived no possibility of delivering the unfortunate man from this doleful place. He was laid on straw; and bruised by his irons, but paid not the least attention
to

to us. The lady I was with, however, who had gained a great ascendant over the goalers by her extraordinary munificence, and her liberality to them, prevailed with them to release the prisoner from all his chains except one, which was bound round his thigh, and fastened to the wall by a padlock.

Though I was greatly distressed at his miserable situation, I dared not discover my feelings; not so much on account of raising suspicions, as because I was conscious of acting contrary to my duty as a magistrate, and feared every thing.

I quitted the prison more sunk and afflicted than when I entered it. What I had seen, and the observations I had made, having totally disheartened me, and almost deprived me of hope, though I would not give up my scheme. I resumed my own habit at the house of my conductress,

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conductress, thanked her for her civility, and quitted her to meditate elsewhere.

Chance having conducted me to a monastery, the immense and spacious gardens of which were open to people of a certain rank, I entered a grove, gave myself up to meditation, and formed a thousand schemes without fixing upon any. The only one which seemed feasible (and which I had already rejected several times) was to gain over one of the goalers: this I could not do without obliging him to forfeit his place, though I might make him amends for the loss of it; nor could he remain in his own country without being exposed to fatal consequences. My heart revolted at this method of effecting my purpose, as I discovered a meanness in it; and yet was it not equally mean, and even unjust, to save a criminal whose life was justly forfeited to the laws of his country? But
I was

I was allied to him by consanguinity—he was the son of my benefactor—and I fancied my motive excused the turpitude of the deed.

While my mind was agitated by a number of confused ideas on this subject, I perceived a monk of a different order from that to which these gardens belonged. He was one of those charitable ecclesiastics whose zeal thought nothing too difficult: he daily visited the prisons—comforted their unhappy tenants—endeavoured to awaken them to repentance—prepared them for death—accompanied them to the torture—and was a well informed theologist whom every body consulted. He was walking in these gardens with a father of the order, and no sooner saw me than he quitted his companion and joined me. I was so much engrossed by my own ideas, and so much affected by the small hopes I had of succeeding

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ceeding in my project, that I was hurt at his approach, and was on the point of turning from him when civility restrained me. The good priest immediately perceived my affliction; and was so much master of his function that he soon prevailed on me to confess a part of my embarrassment.

He seemed pleased at the confidence I placed in him, and gave me credit for having done it voluntarily. He exhorted me to resignation—bid me hope—and assured me my situation strongly affected him. He promised to visit the prisoner the next day, examine the place, and reflect on what could be done. I will not at present, added he, communicate my scheme to you, as I must alone take charge of this affair; my habit, and the duties of my function, often direct my steps to these places, and I shall never be suspected: I will tomorrow inform you of
what

what is practicable and of what is otherwise.

The obstacles which had appeared insurmountable to me before, vanished at this instant; and renovated by hope, I now formed the most sanguine expectation of success. I returned the good monk many thanks for his kindness, determined to make him a more ample confession of the case in point, and then related to him the history of M. de Merville junior. He listened to me with attention; and seemed pleased at the recital, as it confirmed him in his resolution of serving me.

You make me quite easy, said he when I had done speaking; my conscience cannot now upbraid me for acting improperly, since I am convinced your cousin's crime was only the effect of misfortune, the levity of youth, and the fury of
the

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the passions. His crime has, 'tis true, been attended by fatal consequences; but the mercies of God are inexhaustable; much likewise is owing to the virtues of a respectable father, and to an honourable family. I go therefore to serve you, and hope I shall be able to make you happy. Rely on my zeal—on my assiduity—and do not afflict yourself.

He now quitted me, and I returned to my uncle, elated with hope. He had slept but little, and had asked for me frequently. The moment I came to his bed side, which I did immediately, he seized me violently by the arm, and cried, do you then quit me, Floricourt!—do you then abandon me to torments inexpressible! What is my son about?—My wild imagination represents him to me continually.—I fancy I see him listening to his sentence, or going to the torture—I follow his steps in idea,
think

think I see the fatal stroke given him, and yet seem to feel it myself.

I did my utmost to divert these his gloomy ideas, but without success; and as I was not at liberty to divulge the scheme in agitation, I contented myself with suggesting those vague glimmerings of hope, which, though they are ill founded, never fail to give pleasure to the afflicted.

I continued the whole night by his bed side; nor did I quit him the following day till my duty obliged me to attend the courts of judicature. As the evening now approached, and I neither heard from or saw the ecclesiastic, I began to be uneasy, and went to his convent; but finding him still in the prison, I ran towards it, and met him just as he was coming out. On my eagerly inquiring what he had done? he cried, hush!—

hush!—and told me he had seen all, and was satisfied:—tomorrow, added he, at this hour your cousin shall be in our convent.—My measures are taken, and I am sure of success.

I next day waited with the utmost impatience for the hour appointed by the good monk, and ran to his convent before it was expired. He met me with an air of satisfaction, informed me every thing had succeeded to his wish, and then related the manner how he had effected his purpose and kept his promise with me, in the following words—

“ Being perfectly acquainted, said he, with the situation of the dungeon in which your relation lay, the door of which was left open all day in order to purify the air, and seeing the goaler relied on the strength of the only chain which confined the prisoner, I returned
thither

thither to-day, with a religious habit different from my own hid under my gown, together with a false beard and a file. I gave the goaler to understand that I intended to prepare the unhappy man for a general confession; on which we were left alone. I now shaved him, disengaged him from his chain, and dressed him in the habit I had brought with me; I then conducted him into an adjoining dungeon, which happened to be empty, and then went out, locking the other, and desiring he might be left undisturbed in order to collect himself.

A number of our order, whom I had apprized, came to the prison, and found means to introduce many others of different orders, who came in and went out several times. The father with whom I was walking when I first saw you, and whom I was obliged to acquaint with my scheme, himself visited M. de Merville, and conducted him to the door, to which

I accompanied

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I accompanied them, greatly applauding their charity in coming to such a place. As both their faces were hid under their cowls, and as they seemed strongly affected by the object they had just quitted, the goalers recommended themselves to their prayers while they let them out. I now returned to my accustomed duties, far from the dungeon M. de Merville had quitted, never left the prison till all the strangers were gone, and then retired alone, sure of not being suspected."

Delighted at his success, I returned the good ecclesiastie a thousand thanks, and eagerly asked to see my relation. He conducted me to a remote place, far from the convent, where I beheld M. de Merville junior,—pale,—dejected,—and emaciated. I immediately ran to embrace him, and he instantly recollected me, though he turned from me with confusion. I have been informed, said he after a pause,

a pause, that it is to you I owe the preservation of my own and my father's honour: but this is all the obligation I owe you; my misfortunes have exhausted me,—death is at hand,—and I wait for it with impatience—prevail on my father to come and see me. Banish, said I, these funeral ideas, I beseech you, and partake our joy at your deliverance! Go! replied he with bitterness, and be assured I am not insensible of your kindness. Go! and prevail on my father to see—and pardon me! defer not giving him the satisfaction of seeing that my chains are broken—Go, I beseech you!

I now instantly returned to my uncle, and found him up, his resolution having gained the ascendant over his feelings. My dear Floricourt! said he, extending his arms towards me, nature yields to duty! she shudders—and is silent! As I knew he would soon be publicly informed

formed of what had happened, I thought proper to let him remain in this disposition of mind, and flattered myself he would be less scrupulous about the methods taken to procure his son's escape after he was once informed he was set at liberty.

The evasion of the criminal was publicly known the next day, and a strict search made after him ; but as not the least suspicion fell on those who had been instrumental in it, and as the place to which they had conveyed him remained a secret, the search was fruitless. My uncle, astonished at what he heard, immediately came to me, desiring to be informed of all I knew concerning the event, and asked me with impatience what I thought was become of his son ? I now related to him all that had passed, and acquainted him with the obligation we were both under to the good father who had so generously effected the escape
of

of his son. M. de Merville looked at me with satisfaction—upbraided me not for what I had done—and after his surprise had a little subsided, exclaimed—my God! I thank thee! thou hast spared the pangs of a father!—I cannot but rejoice in the escape of my son!

He was now by his own desire conveyed to the Monastery, to which I accompanied him. He flew towards his son (who had thrown himself at his feet) and caressed him with all the fondness of a father, shedding a flood of tears. The cloud on the brow of M. de Merville junior, which seemed to vanish on the entrance of his father, now returned, and he addressed him thus :

“ Sir, said he, I have embittered your days, and am a wretch unworthy your pity or affection. My life has been a torment to you; and should long since have

have been ended by my own hand, but for the affection that I bear my son. You are a father—and so am I!—My son now lives in that state of poverty to which he was bred from his cradle, and is unacquainted with the relation he bears you. I have long quitted my name, because I was unworthy of your alliance, and because I could entail nothing on my son but guilt and infamy.”

My dear son! interrupted M. de Merville, I am now no longer at the tribunal of justice.—I have forgot all that is past. You are again my son,—and your son shall be mine—for my blood flows in his veins. Floricourt! said he, turning to me, complete the work you have begun;—let the child be sent for;—my heart is capacious enough to receive you all three; he shall be your brother.

Having gained the necessary informations, I immediately found out this young relation,

relation, in whose favor my uncle so much exerted himself that he was soon restored to his station, and to his rights as a citizen. M. de Merville junior seemed only to have waited for this event to execute his fatal purpose. My uncle quitted him, afflicted at the gloomy tenour of his discourse; and I remained with him, endeavouring to banish the dreadful ideas with which he was possessed.

“ Life has been long hateful to me,”
 (said he at last) “ and I breathe the air
 “ with aversion. My heart, loaded with
 “ guilt, shudders at itself; and yet I feel
 “ a consciousness of its not being amend-
 “ ed. My present situation is insupport-
 “ able: accustomed to liberty; I long
 “ for, and wish to enjoy it; tho’ I may
 “ perhaps set too great a value on it. I
 “ know my weakness, and have for ma-
 “ ny days endeavoured to investigate my
 “ heart. But all is cankered there.—I
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“ have weighed every thing. I see my
 “ father composed—his honour secured
 “ —and my son restored to his privileges.
 “ I have now nothing more to do with the
 “ world.—I look on it as my scourge—
 “ and might perhaps prove such to it. I
 “ must therefore quit the world, as a
 “ monster unworthy of existence, and by
 “ sparing myself the guilt of making
 “ others wretched—cease to be so.”

As I by no means comprehended the
 meaning of this speech, and imagined he
 only meant to seclude himself from the
 world, by shutting himself up in the con-
 vent which had proved his asylum, I did
 not attempt to dissuade him from his pur-
 pose; but only exhorted him to think
 more favorably of himself. All men are
 frail, said I, and subject to error; all
 have something to reproach themselves
 with; who can be always virtuous?—al-
 ways pure?—and constant in doing right?

You

You cannot be ignorant that it is sometimes more meritorious to recover a fall, than never to have fallen. I have struggled to the utmost, replied he, interrupting me, but all to no purpose.—My resolution is taken.—All efforts would be fruitless.—Leave me—I am a wretch.

Nothing I said had the least effect upon him. He seemed absent while I was speaking to him, and fatigued at my presence; and yet, dreadful as the purport of his conversation was, I conceived some hopes, because what he said was dictated by remorse.

The good old monk who had been of such service to me, now entered, and I repeated to him all I had just heard, and my reflections on the subject, which he greatly approved and applauded me for. M. de Merville in the mean time looked at us with a gloomy aspect, and at last desired to be left alone.

I now quitted him, accompanied by the good Ecclesiastic, who was well informed, thought solidly, and knew the human heart. He expressed himself with facility, had a pleasing manner, and natural eloquence, which strongly attached me to him. We entered into a long conversation, with which I was so much pleased that I stayed with him two hours; and was just on the point of taking my leave, after having made him proper acknowledgements for his kindness, when I heard a noise that made the house shake. The monk trembled, and immediately ran to the apartment of M. de Merville; to which I followed him, terrified at the noise, which seemed to issue from that part of the house. Here we found my unhappy relation bathed in blood, lying on the floor; his skull broke into a thousand pieces, and a pistol lying at his side, which informed us of the suicide he had committed. A letter, directed to his father,

ther,

ther, lay on the table, in which he only repeated the sentiments he had expressed to me, and strongly recommended his son to his protection.

I immediately quitted the convent with horror—left the interment of the body to the pious fraternity, injoining a profound silence on the occasion—and returned to my uncle. I long wished to remain silent on the death of his son; but it was at last necessary to acquaint him of it. This information was a stroke he could not sustain—he fell senseless on the ground—and when he came to himself, sent for his grandson, whom he embraced, and wept over.

Unfortunate child! said he,—to what a father dost thou owe thy being! Great God!—pardon the unhappy man—and make his son more virtuous! Floricourt, (said he, addressing himself to me) these

are the effects of your endeavouring to save my son from human justice!—he is now gone to a more dreadful tribunal!—But I spare you—I will not—I cannot upbraid you.—I see your anguish, and will say no more on the subject. But the return of this son alters my intentions in your favor—your present situation is precarious—and it is now necessary for me to make some provision for you.

Tears for some time prevented my speaking.—But I at last took his hand, and pressing it to my lips, conjured him to live. It is finished! said he; my days are numbered!—be comforted—and reflect that after a long life, and an unhappy old age, death is no unwelcome guest.

He immediately ordered notaries to be sent for, and passed the intermediate time in recommending his grand-son to my care; enjoining me to bring him up in
the

the practice of virtue, and make him worthy of having had a better father. The idea of his son continually recurred to his remembrance, together with his disgraceful and horrible end; and his piety and virtue shuddered at the divine vengeance he had incurred, and which he was perhaps then experiencing.

His tongue began to move with difficulty—his sobs stifled his voice—and he again fell senseless. When he came to himself, and the notaries entered, he was no longer in a condition to make use of them, pious offices being then alone necessary. The good priest to whom I was under so many obligations entering at the time, took advantage of his intervals of reason to prepare him for eternity, and he expired about two hours after, pressing my hand and calling me his son. I must stop here—my tears flow in a torrent at the recollection—and I cannot proceed.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

THE misfortunes by which the career of my life was to be marked, were not yet exhausted, and new ones still threatened me. Born with too acute feelings, and too great sensibility, I every where found new troubles and new pangs. Those I had already experienced were the effects of a first passion, and my inflamed imagination still cherished its destructive fires, while the number of ideas which passed rapidly in my mind, prevented my investigating them, and my organs of speech were inadequate to their expression. Intirely engrossed by my own ideas, I paid no attention to surrounding objects, and never spoke but for myself. The conversation that was extorted from me was interrupted, unconnected, and unintelligible,

telligible, except to myself; and this intoxication, or rather delirium of mind, has almost absorbed my vivacity, and nothing remains to me but my sensibility. Two great passions succeeding each other, must act very differently. The first being always the most violent, exhausts; while the last, though equally deep, is outwardly more composed, because the impetuosity of our feelings at thirty bear no proportion to those we experience at twenty: like the features of the face, which in the action of forming and beautifying vary from their first impression, and becoming by degrees less flexible, refuse to express with their former energy the various emotions of the soul: similar to wax just moulded into form; which is easily deranged by the least trifle; but when hardened by time, resists the most violent impressions. That the motions of the heart become slower and less active, the continuation of my history will evince.

I shall be the more circumstantial, because the occurrences struck me at the time; and shall pursue the progress of my sentiments, because they were formed by degrees. Those I felt for Julia were sudden—filling my whole soul at once, and not permitting me to have a glimpse of any thing separately. I beheld happiness in its full extent—and experienced miseries the most acute. These images and effects succeeding each other with rapidity, admitted of no gradations or shades; the hour of reflection was not yet come, and my mind was not sufficiently collected to consider its condition, because it changed every moment, and was overwhelmed by sudden and repeated strokes of affliction.

M. de Merville having breathed his last, the house echoed with the cries of his domestics, who adored him; and I continued near his body, in silent anguish,
shedding

shedding tears of bitterness. Thus did I remain four hours ; my mind totally engrossed by the spectacle before me, and unable to divert its attention to any other object. I was at length however roused out of this mental lethargy by some officers of justice, who came to set their seal on all the late President's apartments. Astonished at this procedure, I desired to know who sent them, and received for answer that they were commissioned by M. d'Erlet, who had sent them, in the name of M. de Merville's relations, to secure the property of the late President's grandson.

Though the name of d'Erlet, which I could never hear without shuddering, announced further persecutions, I made no opposition to their design ; and should have ordered it to be done myself, had I been in a state capable of reflection. My uncle's sudden death had prevented his
putting

putting his affairs into the order he intended. He had been my benefactor—I was the child of his adoption.—He owed me nothing—and I was now no other than a stranger in his house. I submitted therefore without murmuring; and saw the seal put on my effects and apartment with composure.

My friend Vilson now came to tear me from this place, and insisted on my accompanying him to his house. I followed him mechanically—my affliction not suffering me to see, feel, or foresee any thing. His vigilant friendship, however, still attentive to my concerns, suggested to him the necessity of awakening me out of my present state of insensibility; and if he did not intirely dispel my grief, he rendered it more supportable, and gave me cause enough for reflection.

I will not pretend to console you, said he, for I know the greatness of your loss.

I will

I will rather mix my tears with your's, and lament your benefactor's being compelled by sudden death to leave you unprovided for. But as M. d'Erlet is ever your enemy, and is preparing new torments for you, it is absolutely necessary to recall your faculties in order to oppose his injustice.

These words recalled me to my senses, by awakening my attention to the future, and convinced me how much my fortune was circumscribed, all my dependance being confined to my place, and that place (as the gift of my uncle) liable to be taken from me; in which case, how could I plead my own cause or offer to defend myself. I now foresaw nothing but trouble and inquietude; and concluded I was born to be unhappy. Why? said I, in an agony of grief—why did I not precede my dear benefactor to the grave?—I should not then be subject to
the

NIO EFFECTS OF THE PASSIONS.

the dreadful evils which now threaten me
—nor that poverty, from which he saved
me when in my cradle.

While I was thus giving way to afflicting ideas, d'Erlet was busied in assembling the relations of the young de Merville, and in persuading them of the necessity of immediately appointing him a guardian, as it was greatly to be feared I should take that office on myself, and perhaps by dissipation and imprudence squander the property of the young de Merville without a possibility of making him any restitution: he then added his opinion with regard to the person proper to be fixed on; which was, that he ought to be a man of grave deportment, advanced in years, and in affluent circumstances.

As they all stood in awe of M. d'Erlet, they agreed to his proposal, nominated him guardian to the young de Merville,
and

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and ordering a writing to be drawn up immediately, signed their names to it. Being now fixed in his office according to the necessary formalities, M. d'Erlet summoned me to attend him the next day, in order to assist in taking off the seals, to remove my effects, and to give an account of all those I had any knowledge of.

I obeyed the summons.—But when I entered the house where I had so long resided, and where every thing reminded me of the friend I had lost, my grief was inexpressible. M. d'Erlet looked at me, on my entrance, with a malignant joy that pierced me to the soul; and when my apartment was opened, bid me take away my cloaths—you owe them, said he, to the generous compassion of your uncle, and I am sure my ward will not dispute them with you; as to the furniture of your apartment, that is another thing; and what concerns your office, we shall
hereafter

hereafter examine. Struck with astonishment, and wounded to the quick, I made no reply; but Vilson, enraged at his conduct, treated him with the contempt he deserved; and a magistrate, who was determined to be present on this occasion, awed d'Erlet into silence:—"you ought
 "to blush," said he, "at proceedings
 "such as these; and be assured 'tis still
 "in M. de Floricourt's power to annihilate all your schemes against him; the
 "claims of the young de Merville are
 "very dubious, in spite of all his late
 "grandfather's efforts to establish them;
 "as the marriage of his father was by no
 "means properly authenticated according to the forms prescribed by the law.
 "We keep an exact register of all these
 "circumstances, and if M. de Floricourt
 "is so disposed, stronger proofs may be
 "adduced."

This speech made me tremble. Is it possible, said I, mentally, that secrets I
 thought

thought buried in oblivion should be thus publickly known?—and could I be base enough to make an improper use of them, and expose the disgrace of my relation?—No! I owe every obligation to my deceased uncle!—I scorn to cast a shade on his memory!—and the expectation of making a fortune shall never make me criminal! Sir, said I to the magistrate, be kind enough to follow my example in being silent on this subject, for I prefer misfortune to infamy; the ward of M. d'Erlet is really my uncle's grandson; nature pleads his cause—his rights are established by law—and I am by no means inclined to dispute them.—M. de Merville, when he acknowledged him for his grandson, and recommended him to my care, enjoined me duties from which I shall never swerve.

M. d'Erlet, confounded at what had passed, and suspecting some mystery with
regard

regard to the legitimacy of the young de Merville, abated of his ferocity, as he could not bear the thoughts of my coming into the quiet possession of my uncle's great property; he went so far as to advise me to demand a pension; but as I saw thro' his design, and thoroughly despised him, I retired without making any reply.

I remained at the house of my friend Vilson several months, deploring the losses I had sustained, and fulfilling the duties of my place with reluctance; which, as it now constituted the whole of my income, scarcely supplied me with means to appear with credit. I therefore resolved to get rid of it, and quit a town where I had experienced so many misfortunes, and where every thing reminded me of them. Vilson agreed to my scheme, as he felt the necessity of it, and was convinced I might live comfortably in retirement

ment with circumscribed desires, and might yet see better days, and change of scene was now absolutely necessary in order to dissipate my melancholy. My friend disposed of my place and effects, putting out to interest the money they produced, and got every thing ready for my departure.

As I was perfectly indifferent with regard to the place of my destination, and could not travel continually, for want of money, Vilson proposed my going to Paris, where a respectable body had a suit at law, and consequently stood in need of a distinguished leader to expedite the judgment which was waited for with impatience, but delayed from day to day. My friend thinking this affair would engage my attention, and that the dissipation and hurry of Paris would divert my chagrin, urged me to take this step.

I hesitated

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I hesitated a great while—but at length yielded to his entreaties, and prepared for my departure, without pleasure or regret.

Not being inclined to put those who should intrust me with their affairs to any extraordinary expence, I set out for Paris in the public voiture. Vilson was pleased at my doing so, as he thought the various passengers I should meet with in it would serve to divert my thoughts and dissipate my melancholy; but in this he was mistaken, as I paid not the least attention to those I travelled with.

At the end of three days, we changed our vehicle, and only two of the passengers remained with me. As they were both females, and both going to Paris, I began to look on them with some degree of attention, and found they were mother and daughter. They had both been silent during the journey, in spite of the gaiety of
of

of their companions, and their features and dress wore strong marks of affliction. My eyes, tho' they expressed the state of my mind, and seldom rested on any object long, were involuntarily drawn towards these women.—Their apparent distress affected me, and I regretted my present inability to practice that beneficence which Julia had by her example taught me.

When we arrived at ———, where we were to take the diligence which was to carry us directly to Paris, we found it full, and bespoke for all the ensuing week. This disappointment greatly distressed me, and my companions also; but finding no remedy, we were obliged to submit; and we took up our lodging in the same inn, tho' we did not seem inclined to associate with each other. I wished to be alone—was fatigued with my journey, which had been very irksome to me—and was the
next

next day taken dangerously ill. The elder of the two females being informed of my situation, came to my assistance, afforded me all the succour in her power, and never quitted my bed side during my illness, which lasted some days. Unhappy herself, she pitied me;—and taught by her own feelings, endeavoured to assist the unfortunate. Tho' her conduct inspired me with veneration and respect, I could not now find words to express my gratitude.

The day of her departure being come, she bid me adieu, congratulating me on my approaching convalescence, and adding, that had she not been sure of my recovery, she could not have quitted me. She afterwards informed me that she was going immediately to Paris, and on my offering her my purse, she refused it, saying she expected to receive a sum of money at the end of her journey, and intreated me not to deprive her of the trifling

trifling merit of having done an action which had cost her so little trouble. I now begged to know where she intended to lodge at Paris, as I wished to be of service to her in my turn;—but this she declined; and left me, saying that was a circumstance she was perfectly ignorant of herself.

As I was much hurt at her refusal, and could not help wondering at the cause of her concealing the place of her abode, I was beginning to form conjectures, when some of my fellow travellers in the last coach came to pay me a visit, and added their's. She is certainly going to Paris, said they, in order to dispose of her daughter's charms to the best advantage; and cannot fail of success, as the youth and bloom of the young creature will certainly attract a number of lovers. My soul revolted at this idea; as I could not conceive a woman who had acted so nobly

bly by me, could be capable of such baseness. Can this be possible? said I—can a mother so far forget the character she sustains as to betray her child, and trample on the sacred duties it exacts? I was answered in a tone of ridicule, and my companions gloried in maintaining their own opinion; casting the most odious reflections on her whom I attempted to justify. I was nevertheless convinced by my own feelings that their conjectures were false; that they were dictated by imprudence and levity, and were far from having any foundation in truth. Gratitude compels me to dwell the longer on this circumstance, because many innocent women have been traduced by such cruel insinuations.

New objects soon dissipated these ideas; and my health being re-established, I arrived at the capital, where I thought of nothing but executing the business I came
about

about. I shall not however enter into a long detail of every step I took on the occasion, but only say, that at the end of six months, I obtained a decree in favor of my employers, who presented me with a large sum of money, which I was not at liberty to refuse.

As I had, during all this time, led an active and public life, my grief had been swallowed up in my occupations, and rocked to sleep (if I may be allowed the expression) in the continual hurry I was in, which left me no time for reflection. But when my business was finished, and I returned to my own reflections, I began to consider my present situation, and meditate on the life I intended to lead. All places being alike to me, and my circumstances not permitting me to keep up my acquaintance, who were in reality not to my taste, being men of dissipated characters and given up to frivolous pleasures,

tures, I resolved to live alone. As Paris was continually in a bustle, and thronged with new objects, I preferred residing there to the still life of a province, where I should be unavoidably watched as a stranger; and therefore, with my small revenue, which was regularly remitted to me by Vilson, and was sufficient to supply my wants, I determined to stay at Paris, and immediately changed my lodging. I now took up my habitation at an Hôtel Garné, in the Fauxburg St. Honoré, where I hired a decent apartment, in order to be nearer the *Barrieres*, and entered on the plan of life I had formed in my own mind.

In the morning I walked out to take the air in solitary places, and often recalled the principal events of my life. I recollected Julia, and shed tears to her memory—But those tears were no longer accompanied by despair—they were soft
—sad

—sad—and affecting—and inspired me with a kind of delight. My uncle also often recurred to my remembrance, with all his affection, kindness, and good offices, and appeared to it as seeming to regret having left me in such a situation;—and yet it was a situation I rejoiced in. I never returned home till the evening; and was a perfect stranger in the house, knowing nobody but my landlord and landlady. The few books I had brought with me being my only companions when the inclemency of the weather prevented my going out.

My reflections having kept me awake longer than usual one night, I heard an outcry in an apartment near mine; and a door of communication being near my bed, I could perfectly distinguish the sounds which issued from it. This engaged my attention—and I heard a voice, which seemed that of a woman, say, my

God, do not abandon me!—monster! let me go!—and soon after, help!—help! my dear mother! Her cries seemed now almost suppressed, and the sound of her voice seemed to be obstructed by the application of an handkerchief to her mouth. Your cries are in vain! said a stronger voice.—I know how to prevent your exclamations—be more tractable—and comply with my desires—your fate depends upon it—your mother shall live—your property shall be restored to you—a word from you, or even a tacit consent, shall constitute my felicity, and make you happy—I love!—and my strength is superior to yours! These words being followed by struggles, and scarce audible tones of voice, I hesitated no longer.

I immediately rose—slipped on my night gown—ran to the door of communication, and struck it with violence. Whoever you are, (cried a voice from within)

within) succour me, for God's sake? I now ran to the outward door of the apartment, which was next to mine, and forcing it open, perceived, by the light of a lamp that burned dimly in the chimney corner, a young woman in the utmost disorder, and a man on the point of offering her violence. On my approach he rose, and retired, with fury in his looks; while I addressed the young female (who was still in a tremour) and intreated her to compose herself. "You have now nothing to fear, madam," said I, "only for the future keep your door locked." Perceiving her confusion, I was about to retire, when she addressed me thus—a thousand—thousand thanks to you, good sir, said she—you have preserved my honour—that monster has got a key of my door, by what means I know not, and has taken advantage of my negligence in not having made use of the bolts, to rush into my apartment.

I consoled and comforted her all in my power, and took my leave, desiring to be called in case she heard the least noise. She followed me to her door, and begged I would not enter my apartment till she had fastened it well. I did as she desired, and returned to my bed, full of the pleasing idea of having averted the evil that threatened her.

I soon fell asleep—and rose the next morning later than usual, having almost forgot the adventure of the preceding night, when my attention was excited by groans issuing from the same place. Tho' it was now broad day light, and no longer a time for outrage, I could not forbear listening.

Oh, my mother!—Oh, my daughter!
—how unfortunate we are! said two voices, which seemed to sink for a time into sobs and tears.—Affectionate mother!

ther ! resumed the young woman, whose voice I again knew, what will become of you ?—your health—your age—your exhausted being—have need of succour—and I can afford you none.—Means are proposed to me that I shudder at.—Oh ! my dear mother ! could you submit to live on such conditions ?—could you consent to owe your existence to my infamy !—horrid men !—you attack my innocence—and we plead for justice in vain !

These words strongly affected me.—They pierced me to the soul. She afterwards related what had happened to her, and called my protection and interposition a signal favor from Heaven. She now mingled her tears with her's whom she called mother, and then added, it is now two days since you have tasted food, and we have no resources—why will you still persist in refusing to eat this morsel ?—I am young—I am healthy—and can fast better than you.

G 4 I immediately

I immediately rose ;—what I heard redoubling my natural sensibility. Heavens! said I, can I subsist in peace, while two of my fellow creatures are ready to perish for want by my side?—no!—I will fly to their assistance! I then ran to their door, which was immediately opened, and heard the daughter exclaim—it is my protector!—while she threw herself at my feet. Endeavouring to raise her, I cast my eyes on her mother, and instantly discovered she was the woman who had attended me in my illness and had succoured me in my distress. Is it you, madam? said I, (while she recollected me in turn) how happy am I in having this opportunity to testify my gratitude for your kind attention! Ah! dear Sir! said she—you have preserved the honour of my child!—overcome by fatigue, I had fallen into a profound sleep in the adjoining chamber.—I heard no noise—and had forgot all my sorrows, when you preserved my daughter

daughter from violation. O, Sir, you have spared my age the bitterest of all misfortunes ! How shall I ever make you amends ?

Interrupting the effusions of this excellent heart, I put aside all ordinary methods—all accustomed compliments—and contented myself with having done my duty, without telling her so—and yet resolving to fulfill it.

As their condition required immediate assistance, and as grief and want were pictured in their faces, there was no time for delay, or attention to compliments. Let us forget all ceremony, said I, and all afflicting ideas ; let us dwell on the pleasure of having met again, and esteem each other for the services we have reciprocally bestowed. Let us endeavour to show our gratitude according to our ability, and let a mutual confidence subsist be-

tween us. Look on me as your friend : a friend, the more affectionate, for being unhappy ; because his heart has been meliorated by affliction and softened by distress. Dry your tears therefore, my dear madam, for griefs are lessened by being divided. Let us now think of some refreshment, which is absolutely necessary after the emotions of the past night. I hope you will not refuse partaking of my breakfast, which is already prepared, and which I will immediately bring.

As I read a degree of embarrassment in their eyes, I added— you say I have been happy enough to oblige you—have I not then a right to exact something in return ?—but I wave my privilege, and ask it as a favor. Not staying for an answer, I now ran to my apartment, and ordered a breakfast and two small messes of broth to be got ready in the interim, with which I immediately returned to them.

As

As I wished to have them swallow the broth by flow degrees, in order to prevent the ill consequences of sudden refreshment, after so long a fast, I carried each of them a spoonful, saying to the mother, here is a cordial for your age—and to the daughter, here is one for your youth, after the irksome watching you sustained last night. It is necessary to begin in this manner, but we shall soon have more substantial food.

I saw them hesitate, and appear ready to refuse my offer; but reading their constraint in their countenances, I forced them to comply, by saying, I intreat you to grant my request, as a mark of your satisfaction at our accidental meeting. I then presented a spoonful to the mother, which she tasted, and to the daughter, who followed her example. I took care they should pause between every spoonful, and afterwards prevailed on each of them to drink a glass of wine. This having strengthened

strengthened their stomachs, I put off breakfast an hour longer, which made it late; and I quitted them, after having left my purse on their toilet so as not to be observed by them. I returned softly to my own apartment, and could not forbear listening at the door of communication, as I wished to gratify my curiosity by hearing what they would say.

I heard them thank Heaven for having sent me to their assistance; and when they had found the purse, which they soon did, concluding it was mine, I heard the mother, who seemed astonished, say, after a long pause,—this is left by a man—a young man too—and few are disinterested at his age—I have seen many actions equally meritorious in appearance, hatefully criminal in their motive: saying this, she immediately came to my door, out of which I had taken the key, and made no answer to her request of being admitted, wishing

wishing to make her believe I had quitted my apartment. He is absent, said she, returning to her own—but what I am obliged to defer at present may be done hereafter.

I at first felt myself hurt and irritated at the idea she had formed of me; but when I came to reflect on the horrid attempt which had been made on the chastity of her daughter, my indignation subsided, and I began to think her diffidence excusable and even meritorious. I was nevertheless resolved to cure her of her unjust suspicions; for never were intentions more pure than mine. I had scarce looked at her daughter, and was no more interested about her than I was about her mother.

While I was indulging these reflections, I heard somebody enter their apartment, and soon recollected the voice of the landlady. Madam, said she to the mother,
you

you have been here three months, and owe me for two months lodging; urgent affairs compel me to remind you of this, and to inform you that it is customary to pay every month. Your law-suit may last a great while; the debt increases, and I cannot stay; therefore pay me my money, or give me security.

As I had no conception of such brutality of conduct, I was greatly surprized at this speech, and equally curious to know whether my purse would be made use of on this pressing occasion. I therefore redoubled my attention to hear all that passed. The mother fetched a deep sigh, and putting a ring of value into the landlady's hand, desired she would keep it till she was paid her money, which she hoped would be very soon.

I cannot describe the various emotions with which my soul was affected at this moment.

moment. I admired the fortitude and true greatness of mind of this woman, and yet deplored her want of confidence in me. When the landlady quitted their apartment, I followed her, saying, 'that as I had just received a sum of money for her lodger, I desired to have the ring back again. She readily complied with my request, and I immediately payed her what was owing, and one month before hand, taking a proper receipt. I now returned to the mother and daughter, determined to leave the ring and receipt in their apartment.

The moment I was seated, they presented me with my purse, desiring me to take it again. I pretended ignorance, and refused to receive it; but they were too well convinced of its being mine to doubt of its being so. Well (said I) I must then plead guilty. But why will you refuse my offer? I know all—for the landlady has informed

informed me of your situation. Accept therefore, the trifle I left with you ; and divide with me my little fortune, for I cannot make a better use of it. Surely you will not persist in refusing to accept the superfluities of a man of honour, whose only motive is gratitude, and expose yourself to the baseness and chicanery of a number of villains, who will unavoidably take advantage of your distress, and sell their favors at the expence of virtue and honour ! You cannot be ignorant, madam, (said I with vehemence) of the danger you are in. Plunged into adversity—having a daughter in want of every thing, and more afflicted at your situation than her own—overwhelmed by calamity—she may at last lose you. Think of the consequences. Left to her own reflections—in a state of want and misery—overwhelmed by misfortune—and deprived of her mother—she will have no other alternative than that of death—or dishonour—not to mention

mention the snares that will be laid for her by wicked and designing men. She may not, perhaps, have the liberty to chuse, for force may be employed. Yes madam, continued I, seeing her start, such is the state to which you will reduce your daughter; if you persist in a delicacy so ill understood. You are both in want of assistance, and your daughter claims your continuance with her; do not—oh do not—by rejecting my offer, expire with the bitter regret of having abridged your life thro' false delicacy, and of having left your daughter in a merciless world without a guide. Pardon these reflections, Madam, added I, for they are absolutely necessary. Had I contented myself with a simple offer of assistance, without using every possible method to make you accept it, I should have been deficient in probity, and should have failed in my duty. I have made no representations but what are founded in truth. You ought to live, if
you

you regard your child. And whose assistance do you reject?—that of a man who owes you all—who would not have survived but for your attention—a man who has been unfortunate, and may be so still—a man who has met with beneficent characters himself, and who wishes to be included in that number. You do not know me now—but may hereafter—do me the justice to acknowledge I am not one of the dissolute, and that I am worthy of your confidence.—I call Heaven to witness the purity and sincerity of my intentions—and that your former conduct is the sole motive of them. I have long been deprived of a mother, and yet feel the duty and affection of a child; let me therefore be your son, and let your daughter be my sister; honor me with your friendship, and place a confidence in me; for I think I may venture to assure you that you never will repent it. What say you, my dear mother?—for such you have proved

proved yourself to be by your attention in my illness ; can you suspect your son ?

As the idea of Julia had occurred to me during this conversation, and as I fancied she heard and approved what I said, my imagination became heated by degrees, and I spoke with so much earnestness, that Madame Vareuil (such was the name of this excellent woman) fell into a profound reverie ; but when she came to herself, she took my hand, in a kind of transport, saying, are you a man—or an angel ?—but whoever you are, you have subdued my repugnance to accepting your offer—Silvia, added she, turning to her daughter, and looking at her with an affrighted air, what dreadful ideas has he raised in my mind—ideas that never occurred to me before. But I am now resolved—your safety shall prevail—O ! Floricourt !—if integrity, generosity and virtue, speak in you, how great is your value !—but if
you

you mean to deceive me!—pardon a mother's fears—I think you cannot deceive me!—but a series of misfortunes, and repeated proofs of treachery, make me suspicious. I accept your succour; but it must be limited; and you must suffer me to repay you if my lawsuit should prove successful: these are my only conditions.—And I accept them, replied I—your necessity ceasing, my assistance will be needless; and I shall then apply what is useless to you to the relief of some other.

These last words composed Madame Vareuil, as they were a further proof of those principles I had already disclosed. After this conversation we became inseparable; and when she found her ring, and the receipt, she thanked me over again. The habit of being together created an intimacy between us, and she communicated her troubles to me. She told me her lawsuit went on very slowly, and that she

she dared not attend it any more, at least with her daughter, as she too much attracted the eyes of the judges. Silvia, tho' not absolutely beautiful, was lovely and well made; she possessed the *je ne sçai quoi* in an eminent degree, and her grief and languor rendered her doubly interesting.

As Madame Vareuil often spoke to me about her lawsuit, and as I was ignorant of its cause, I intreated her to give me some account of it; my acquaintance with the bar, enabling me to be of service to her; I offered her my assistance, and told her I would take the trouble of attending off her hands. She thanked me a thousand times, saying my goodness to her was inexhaustible; she then added, that the history of her life was very distressing, and that she feared it would prove but a melancholy entertainment. I however intreated her to relate it, which she did as follows:—

T H E

THE HISTORY

OF

MADAME VAREUIL.

MY family was originally French, and had long embraced Calvinism, when the revocation of the Edict of Nantes compelled it to quit its native country, and take refuge in another, where it might, unmolested, practice its own mode of worship; and England was chosen in preference to every other. There I was born; and thither particular business drew Monsieur Vareuil thirty years ago, whose death has engaged me in the lawsuit which has brought me to Paris. But it is previously necessary to relate the history of his life, in order to explain its cause. I know you will be surprized at his misfortunes

fortunes as well as mine ; and that many of them will excite both your compassion and horror.

M. de Vareuil was born at M——, and was the only son of a respectable and opulent family. He was the idol of his parents ; and their too great zeal for their religion and its customs, proved the cause of his misfortunes.

At ten years of age he was taken dangerously ill, and was attended by the most skilful physician, in vain ; for his disease baffled all the assistance of art. He remained for some months in a state between life and death ; and his parents, who never quitted him, were plunged into despair.

A monk of the Order of ———, who was their confessor, attended them daily, in order to participate their affliction, and to support them under it. He exhorted them

them to resignation ; and intreated them to apply for assistance only to that Being who had the power of giving life, or causing death, and could alone restore their son. His exhortations and advice had so powerful an effect on these distressed parents, that they redoubled their confidence in God, and increased their prayers and alms: but contrary to the expectation of the physicians, the patient still lived, tho' without hope of recovery.

While he remained in this state, his parents formed a resolution, the most strange and extravagant that can be conceived, and to which he fell a sacrifice ; this was, that if their son recovered he should become a monk of the same order as that of their confessor, and ratified it with a solemn vow, which perhaps the monk had himself dictated ; but however that might be, the young Vareuil continued a month longer in the same situation, and

and at the end of it sustained a dreadful crisis, the continual faintings he fell into at this time being an emblem of death, he seemed without sense or motion for four hours, and then began to give signs of life. Hope now returned to the hearts of his parents, and they renewed their vow, firmly persuaded that his being spared was a miracle; in which belief they were strengthened by the monk.

At the age of thirteen, the young Vारेuil was, by his parents, (who had spared no pains to inspire him with a taste for that way of life) entered into the monastery, and at fourteen he took the habit. The affectionate tenderness of his parents, and the attention paid him by his superiors, all conspired to seduce his young heart and prevent his seeing things in their right light; not to mention the languor caused by a long illness, which had enfeebled his habit of body, checked his sensations, and

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retarded the influence of his passions. They were continually telling him of his miraculous recovery—reminded him of what he owed to God—and of the obligations he was under to serve him faithfully in a monastic life. The books they recommended to his perusal, and the discourses they perpetually held with him on religious subjects, heated his imagination; and at the age of fifteen, when his noviciate expired, he scrupled not to take the oaths—oaths, which bound him to the practice of virtues which he only knew by name, and which it would one day be impossible for him to practise!

He was scarce bound by these formidable vows, the breach of which was dreadful, when the pleasures of his situation vanished, and the advantages he had procured the convent were forgotten; as he had not been put to trial during his noviciate, his religious exercises were
then

then dispensed with; but he was now compelled to every thing that was severe and painful.—Watchings—fastings—and the most servile occupations. He had not had time hitherto for study or reflection; but he now applied to them, and by the assistance of some monks of his own age, began to see things in a different light. The senses, which had till now been dormant, beginning to show their influence.

At the age of eighteen, his health being perfectly re-established, his passions began to work, and he in vain endeavoured to suppress them. He was now convinced he had promised beyond his strength; and investigating his own heart, and examining the propensities of nature, began to think himself ill used by those who had compelled him to take vows he could not keep, and concluded that they alone were answerable for the breach of them.

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These

These sensations and suppositions becoming stronger every day, he began to look on his cloister with uneasiness, and at length fell into despair. He complained of his irksome situation to his parents; but they paid not the least attention to him, as his mother had just lain in, and a new son had withdrawn all their affection from him. The daily benefactions before bestowed on the monks for his sake, were now withdrawn, and the community treated him accordingly. It is dangerous to sour the disposition of young men of Vareuil's age; and unhappily for him, the serious characters of the monastery, who might have awakened him by gentle methods to a sense of his duty, compelled him, by their rigour, to seek the society of the lately professed monks, who were in the same predicament, and whose conversation, and the books they lent him, served to corrupt him still more.

The

The passions, while we reside amidst the tumult and hurry of the world, are easily kept in order, because there are no insurmountable obstacles in their way; but in cloisters or convents they are ungovernable. Vareuil experienced their fatal influence, and continually fixed his eyes on forbidden objects. During the religious ceremonies, he dwelt on the surrounding objects with delight; and the number of women whom he every day saw at church cherished his illicit desires; and when he went out, he was in the same predicament.

It is easy to conceive how his religious duties were performed during this state of mind: they were either carelessly run over, or totally neglected. This conduct was soon observed by his superiors, who never failed to inflict severe punishments upon him, instead of endeavouring to bring him back to his duty by gentle and soothing methods. This treatment, toge-

ther with his ungovernable passions, threw him into such a state of desperation, that he was often on the point of putting an end to his existence by striking his head against the wall of his cell. He often conjured his parents to take him out of the hell in which they had placed him, or at least suggest to him some means of making his escape : but they were deaf to all he said ; and so far from redressing his grievances, that they informed the Monks of his complaints, who redoubled his mortifications and penances. Vareuil now began to discover how necessary it was to dissemble, in his situation ; and therefore added hypocrisy to his other irregularities. His passions becoming more violent than ever by this constraint, he, and two young monks in the same situation, and of equally ungovernable passions, resolved to attempt their gratification in spite of all obstacles ; and having connexions in the town where the monastery was situated, they were
soon

soon introduced into houses of ill fame, and repeated their visits frequently. Tired at length of their confinement, and of the penances continually inflicted on them, they resolved to escape from the convent, and take shelter in some other country: but as they could not make the necessary preparations for their departure without some assistance, they were obliged to communicate their design to some of the women at whose houses they had been entertained, and who thought they were doing a meritorious action by seducing these young libertines, and initiating them into vile practices: they therefore undertook to provide them with proper garments, and to have them in readiness on the shortest notice.

Being perfectly easy on this head, they now began to think of some method to raise money in order to supply their expences; and Vareuil, by his influence

over his mother, in spite of her indifference towards him, and by selling some of her jewels, obtained a small sum; while his companions drained the purses of their acquaintance under various pretences. Possessed of this money, they were in great fear of losing it, as their order proscribed the accumulation of riches, and as all that was given them was to be immediately put into the hands of the superior of the convent, who might now, perhaps, discover their treasure. This idea made them very uneasy, as they could not trust it with their abandoned female companions, however fond they were of them; and knew not where to place it securely. After various deliberations, however, they carried it out of town, and digging a hole in the ground, in a remarkable place, by which they were to pass, they buried their money, and returned well satisfied with what they had done.

Their

Their mistresses informing them soon after that their dresses were ready, they instantly flew to their rendezvous, and threw off their monkish habits, which were immediately hid by these abandoned women, who detained the young libertines some time by debauchery; and being themselves intoxicated by wine, thought it would afford them great merriment to inform the superior of their design, and to beg the favor of him to come and take leave of his young brothers. They accordingly dispatched a messenger to the convent:—but their scheme was frustrated; their disorderly way of life had been long known in the neighbourhood, and the young monks had been frequently seen at their house, and were observed again just as they entered: this gave great offence to the devotees of that quarter; who sounded the alarm, and sent to acquaint a party of soldiers, whose duty it was to watch that quarter of the town by

order of the police. 'Tis impossible to describe the astonishment and terror of the young monks on this occasion, who were only half-dressed, and sought for their proper habits in vain. They trembled—they wept—and the women, who were taken up at the same time, were in a similar situation.

The superior, who shuddered at their appearance, arrived at this moment; and their shame and terror if possible increased. The populace assembled round the door; and the superior, who heard nothing but outcries and abusive language, darted the most enraged glances at his scandalous brothers, one of whom was particularly obnoxious to him.—Vareuil's stubborn spirit was not calculated to inspire friendship: sour and disgusted at what he had suffered, he had been very free in his expressions, and had assumed a tone of voice which these men, so humble abroad and
so

so haughty in their convents, never pardon. Overwhelmed with rage and vexation, the superior for some time remained silent, his confusion being at its height; and then asked it as a favor that the culprits might be conducted home at night, in order to prevent the odium which would otherwise be thrown on the convent. But to this he was answered in the negative by the rough commander of the soldiers, who triumphed in thus exposing the religious community, and who would only consent to the superior's returning home by a private door. Vareuil and his companions were in the mean time conducted in broad day light to their convent, amidst the hooting of the populace; and having on their secular dresses, with their monkish gown thrown over them.

The superior had already given orders, and eight athletic lay-brothers received the young monks on their arrival. They
bound

bound their hands, after having discarded the soldiers, and dragged them into a distant hall, where a committee of the elders belonging to the convent were assembled; the young ones being carefully kept at a distance, as the crimes of which the culprits were found guilty could not be made known to them without danger, lest their passions might thereby take the alarm—old men were therefore chosen as judges—men, who having outlived their passions, no longer remembered having been once under their influence.

The superior now gave an account of all that had passed, and of the situation in which these unfortunate young men were found by him. They all trembled at his recital; and turning away their heads, and lifting up their hands to Heaven, exclaimed, that there was no punishment adequate to their crimes! The culprits, petrified with fear, knew not what

to reply ; as they could not justify their conduct, or deny the odium it had occasioned. They therefore waited in silence for their sentence ; by no means supposing it was to be so dreadful as their judges intended it should be ; being perfectly ignorant of monkish severity, or the discipline inflicted in the interior parts of a convent.

The monks saw with a kind of horror the scandal which their inconsiderate young brothers had brought upon them ; and debated a great while what punishment they should inflict. They began by making them undergo a very severe discipline, and then ordered them to be conducted to prison till they should determine their fate. The lay-brothers, who had retired, were now recalled ; and Vareuil and his companions were taken into a subterraneous passage, on each side of which were stone benches erected, and at the bottom of it stood

stood a crucifix. To this place their judges followed them; where the superior preached them a sermon; and when it was over, they were immediately stripped and tied to the stone pillars that supported the roof, and the brothers, properly armed for the occasion, kept whipping them unmercifully, whilst their judges chanted their offices; resting each in his turn to take breath. Neither the agonies nor the groans of these unfortunate culprits were attended to, and their piercing cries were drowned by those who were singing. This cruel discipline continued an hour; and the culprits, who had fainted away, were washed with vinegar. The pain which this occasioned brought them to themselves, and they gave signs of life by piercing cries, which the superior interrupted by renewing his reproaches, and accusing himself of acting with too much lenity. Vareuil was the most fiery of the three. His rage now broke out with fury.

fury. Tiger! exclaimed he, addressing himself to the superior, do you boast of moderation and lenity after the barbarous usage we have received! 'tis true, we have acted wrong, and through the fire of youth, and the impetuosity of passion, have forgotten our duty: but we are still objects of compassion; as no man can at all times fulfill oaths so extensive as ours, and especially in my case; for you cannot be ignorant how they were imposed on me. I never was formed to take them, and can never observe them. If the preservation of my life was a miracle, and if nothing but my parents cruel vow could have saved it, why would they not let me die?—for I should then have been happy—Nature speaks loudly in me, and reason agrees with her voice. Their vow imposes no obligation on me; and those which you induced me to take, at an age when I was unable to form any judgment of them, bind me not! If you think me
unworthy

unworthy to reside among you, why do you keep me here? Reject me—despise me—and if your scruples prevent you from opening your doors to me—only unbind me, and I will soon rid you of an inmate that dishonours you.

The superior heard this speech with the utmost indignation, and ordered the punishments to be repeated; when Vareuil suddenly exclaimed—finish your bloody work!—deprive me of the life you make insupportable!—I defy both your torments and you!—but if I escape, these hands shall set fire to your detestable monastery. Saying these words, he made a violent effort to disengage himself from his bonds; which being unequal to the strength he exerted in his rage, he broke loose, and running up to the superior, seized him by the throat, and would have certainly strangled him had not the fathers interposed and made him loose his hold.

hold. Too weak to make any further resistance by his actions, he now burst forth into the most bitter imprecations against the barbarians whom he ought to have endeavoured to soften; while his companions, irritated by the pains they felt, and encouraged by his example, joined their execrations to his. They were not however permitted to continue them long; for they were soon thrown into their former faintings by a succession of stripes, and were conveyed, in a dying condition, into a deeper dungeon, where no further care was taken of them than that of having their cloaths thrown over them.

Coming to themselves a few hours after, they wiped away the blood with which they were covered, put on their cloaths as well as they could, and by the light of a dim lamp cast their affrighted looks around the horrid place in which they were confined, and which had hitherto

therto been unknown to them. They wept; and yet felicitated each other on not being separated. Pleasure had united them—misfortunes redoubled their attachment—and they sought to comfort each other by a reciprocal communication of their sentiments. During the time their wounds confined them to one place, their only conversation consisted of their resolution to make their escape the moment they were set at liberty; for which purpose they determined to dissemble, and assume an appearance of sincere repentance.

While they were thus supporting each others spirits by the hopes of release, and were moving about their dungeon, they met with a stone which seemed not well secured, and acquainted each other with the circumstance. This inspired them with the hope of an outlet, and induced them to try to remove it; and they succeeded in so doing beyond their expectation—

tion—the stone yielded readily, being hardly fastened. But the materials which it was still necessary to remove, in order to make an opening, being much beyond their strength, and the passage too well cemented, they gave up the attempt. While they were groping about this place, in hopes of finding a possibility of escaping, they found a paper and pencil, and bringing them to their sepulchral lamp, they found the paper contained the following words—“ I have passed forty years
 “ in this convent; and the various em-
 “ ployments in which I have been en-
 “ gaged, have let me into all its secrets;
 “ the hatred of the superior is the cause
 “ of my misfortunes—but it is a punish-
 “ ment I deserve, for having suffered ma-
 “ ny fathers to perish in these dungeons
 “ for very trivial offences—It is now my
 “ turn; and I shall never quit this place
 “ till I am removed into that where I am
 “ to die.—Such is the cruel law esta-
 “ blished here. Should any future vic-
 “ tims

“ tims find this paper, let them deplore
 “ their fate, and drop a tear to the me-
 “ mory of brother Ambroise.”

Vareuil and his companions were petrified at the contents of this paper. They all remembered brother Ambroise; and knew he had suddenly disappeared about seven years before, when the superior said he was sent for to Rome, by the general's order, on account of his great wisdom and learning. As on the same paper, beneath what brother Ambroise had written, there were hand writings of different sorts, and one by another brother of the order, who had accidentally found it, and who bitterly lamented his fate, signing his name, these unhappy young men, seeing no end to their misery, were plunged into the deepest despair. Vareuil however wrote in his turn, and these were his words—
 “ Three fresh victims are come to perish
 “ here. Revenge knows not how to
 “ pardon—and they ask of God that
 “ vengeance

“vengeance which they cannot themselves obtain.” Having signed his name to this writing, as did his companions theirs, he conveyed it back to the place in which it was found, and left it there. They now remained silent—each engrossed by their own dreadful situation, and each retiring to a corner of the dungeon to indulge their grief and to reflect on their dismal and hopeless condition. When they rejoined each other again, they put forth cries of anguish, and vented their rage in the most bitter imprecations against their cruel oppressors; and Vareuil, whose passions were the most vehement, at last broke out into the following rhapsody——What have I done, just Heaven, said he, to merit this cruel chastisement?—I have been frail, ’tis true!—I have been misled by my passions!—I have failed in my duty!—but is it for men to avenge your cause? O-Divine Justice, if these are your executioners—what men have you chosen!—and am I as guilty in your eyes as in those of

of these cruel executioners? Thou can'st not be implacable. Thou can'st not have attended to vows suggested by artifice, and pronounced by ignorance!—The reason which thou hast given me was intended to enlighten my understanding, and I cannot think myself so guilty as I am taught to believe. The torments I suffer are insupportable! and yet these torments are to last my life!—oh, horror! horror!—deprive me then of the life you gave me, or soften the hearts of my merciless tyrants.—Oh! my father! oh! my mother!—behold to what a state of wretchedness you have reduced your son!—your false tenderness, and mistaken zeal, have plunged him into unutterable woes; woes from which you cannot now release him!—Perhaps the barbarians have even told you I am dead!—perhaps you weep—but know not what I suffer!

In this manner did he run on; expressing by turns his sensibility and rage; his madness prompting him at times even to accuse heaven itself. Bread and water
were

were brought to them for subsistence; but they rejected it for some time, resolving to die of hunger. Two whole days did they fast, after the perusal of Brother Ambroise's letter, without changing their resolution: but at length falling asleep through fatigue, and awaking a little refreshed, they felt the necessity of eating, and ran to their bread, making a melancholy meal. A wicket through which they received their food opening some hours after, they were exhorted to repentance and resignation: to this they answered by their tears, groans, and supplications, and the door was shut again.

Having languished in this place upwards of two months, they became more tranquil, the excess of their grief rendering them insensible; and the certainty of the duration of their misery, which had at first afflicted them so deeply, became at last the cause of their resignation—their moments of affliction now returning only by intervals.

Their

Their wounds were healed ; and they were now informed that they must prepare to appear before the Assembly, which was to pronounce their fate. Situated as they were, this information gave them no pain ; as they could not be in a more wretched state. They therefore waited unappalled for the moment in which they were to receive their sentence, and a gleam of hope still darting into their souls, they fancied the community would take pity on their youth, and put an end to their sufferings ; especially as they intended to show the utmost submission, and to appear very penitent. In these reflections did they pass eight days ; at the end of which they were sent for ; and being pale, weak, and emaciated, were suffered to follow their conductor without being bound.—Alas ! they were incapable of making any resistance ; and proceeded, with trembling steps, tears flowing from their eyes, the utmost remorse painted in their countenances, and their whole appearance

appearance expressive of that repentance which they hoped would soften the hearts of their judges.

When they arrived at the hall where they had suffered the beginning of their punishments, the austere and venerable assembly was seated, and in the midst of them the superior, who, after a long pause, began a recapitulation of the crime the young monks had been guilty of; dwelling a great while on the scandal it had occasioned, and the odium it had thrown on their religious society, which had been insulted by the populace and had been ridiculed by satirical compositions repeated at the doors of the convent; and then addressing himself to the culprits, reproached them with the utmost bitterness for their conduct; while they in return showed the greatest contrition and penitence, confessing they were guilty, and saying God was merciful, and that they hoped to receive mercy from men. The superior now turned towards his brethren, and addressed them thus—It is for you, reverend fathers, said he, to consult together,

gether, and to pronounce the doom of these young men ; but let us first implore the assistance of Heaven, and act according to its dictates. They now ordered the culprits to be conducted to the other end of the hall, and prostrated themselves, singing and repeating some prayers ; after which they rose, and being all of one mind, ordered the criminals to return, when throwing themselves on their knees, the chief of the community began—Your crime, said he, addressing himself to the culprits, ought to excite the utmost indignation of this reverend assembly ; as the most horrible death would be insufficient to expiate your guilt—But life and death are in the hands of God alone—the church abhors blood, and will not dip its hands in yours, tho' your crimes and premeditated apostacy dispenses it from all laws—you have therefore obtained mercy. The young men prostrated themselves at these words, and interrupted him by an exclamation of joy and gratitude.—But their joy was of short duration.

A perpetual

A perpetual imprisonment, continued the superior, is the gentle punishment to be inflicted on you—a punishment very inadequate to your crimes. Words cannot describe the feelings of the culprits at this moment—their grief and despair being heightened by the lively hope which they had just before entertained of being pardoned. Go, added this inexorable judge, addressing himself to the lay brothers—go and conduct them to the place where we shall immediately follow you. They were now ordered to descend into a sort of gallery, much deeper under ground than the place where they had hitherto been confined. It was very long; and lead to three separate dungeons—the first of them was so low, short and narrow, that it could contain but one man, and that only in a sitting posture—the second was in the shape of a coffin, and the man who lay in it had scarce room enough to turn himself;—and the third was equally low, and only permitted the man who was confined in it to lie at full length, though it was more extensive. They

were all shut by grated iron doors, which were never opened more after they were once shut; the prisoners food being conveyed to them through the grates.

These dungeons were so situated, and so separated from each other, as to prevent all communication between the unhappy beings who were confined in them, and so as to preclude the melancholy satisfaction they might feel in mingling their tears and groans. A perpetual darkness reigned around them; and the thick air these caverns contained was renewed with difficulty by a vent hole that communicated with a cellar which scarcely admitted day-light. As these dungeons were not equally dreadful, they were ordered to cast lots for them; and the last falling to Vareuil, he was immediately shut up in it; while his companions, whose fate he ever after remained ignorant of, were confined in the others. Vareuil, who had entered this dismal mansion with horror and despair, soon discovered its utmost extent by crawling about in it, which was nine feet long and six feet

feet wide; and as he found by the solidity of the stones that there was no room for hope, he gave himself up to the most agonizing reflections. This unhappy man being deprived of light, buried alive, and breathing with difficulty a contaminated air, earnestly wished for death to relieve him from his misery; tired of his confined posture, unable to rise, endeavouring to seat himself, moving from side to side without hope or expectation, he broke out into the most horrid execrations—he cursed his father and mother, whose fatal vow had brought such torments upon him—he cursed the cruel monks who had suggested those he had himself taken, and accused Heaven itself for having attended to them—and only wished for liberty one moment, in order to strangle the barbarous executioners whose inhumanity he experienced, and whom he cited to the tribunal of that avenging God whose anger he had often defied, and whose justice he had accused.

Can it be possible, said he, often, that I should be condemned to an hateful life, and torments without end!—a life which would be better ended on a scaffold!—for the breach of oaths which could not bind me, and for frailties which would have been unnoticed in the world! In this manner did he pass the first year of his confinement; rage—groans—tears and blasphemy—being his only employments. Nor did the second year lessen his transports—he now found his dungeon become still more insupportable, by the extraordinary humidity he felt in it; the stones which surrounded it being wet, and the water entering it on all sides, especially at one end. This new inconveniency increased his torments, while the cloaths he had on his back (worn out by time) fell to pieces on his body. Acute pains now seized him—his strength was exhausted—and he sincerely wished for death to relieve him. What would he not have given to have been able to stand upright or to seat himself even for a moment. His cruel goalers, who came every week to
renew

renew his food (which was not wholesome after the three first days) took no notice of his complaints or his submissions, and laughed at his rage. A conduct like this is scarce conceivable!—for is it possible that superstition and error should so far blind the intellectual faculties of man, as to make him suppose he is endued with the power of exercising divine vengeance? Worn down by unwholesome food and by exquisite pains, Vareuil now waited for death with the impatience of a wretch, who growing weary of his chains, looks upon life as a burthen. Towards the end of the third year of his captivity, he was on the point of expiring, as the strength of his constitution, which had hitherto sustained him, gave way to his complicated misery. The humidity of his dungeon now encreasing daily, he crawled towards the place from whence the water issued, and heard a motion, followed by a dull sound, which resembled the breaking of a wall, and the falling of stones into water. Terrified at what he heard, he returned to the other

end of his dungeon, where he remained insensible for some time, and when he came to himself, it was only to deplore the horror of his fate;—he made no doubt but that the moisture he felt, and the noise he heard, was owing to some stagnant water in the environs of the place, which had undermined the wall; and trembled lest it should continue to break it down, and at last suffocate him—having now totally forgotten his misery and his former desire of death.

In this situation did he remain some days without any thing new occurring; and tho' his cruel goalers came as usual, he did not think proper to inform them of what had happened, as he knew that would be useless; and as he had long ceased to speak to them, his complaints being disregarded. Soon after they were gone, he heard a new sort of noise, which redoubled his terrors; and he extended his arms with great fear, in order to discover whether the water which he thought had then entered his dungeon, was coming towards him; but finding it was not,
he

he took courage, and advanced slowly towards that side of his dungeon where he fancied the water entered. He found a breach in the wall; and passing his arm through it, dipped his hand into water. This made him tremble; and he remained twenty four hours in the fearful expectation and dread of death. His inquietude continually forcing him towards the aperture; he at last observed that the water retired, and by degrees sunk a foot below the opening it had made in the wall. As the aperture was wide, he sounded it with his feet; and descending, found he could stand upright, though he was up to his middle in water. The long space of time in which he had been unable to assume this posture, had weakened his legs, and they could scarce sustain him; he therefore went out and returned to his dungeon alternately; being emboldened by degrees, and finding the water subside, he ventured to walk a few paces; but the inequality of the ground, the mud into which he often plunged his feet, and the fear of not finding his dun-

geon again, prevented his going to any great distance. He however began to take courage, and collecting his ideas, endeavoured by degrees to find out the nature and use of this subterraneous passage; and at length discovered that it was a running water, which passed under the convent and divided itself into two branches, one of which ran into the country, and the other terminated in the town. He now began to cherish the pleasing hope of regaining his liberty, and discovering that the water had in its course destroyed the wall, and that it was decreasing by swift degrees, entertained the most flattering expectation of success. In the course of a week he found his passage free, and was impatient to be gone, when prudence dictated the necessity of staying till his gaoler came again, to whom he intended to show himself in order to convince him that he was well, for fear he should come before the accustomed time; a week being sufficient to compleat his purpose, and enable him to make his escape by degrees, according as his strength permitted

mitted him, before they could discover his flight.

The dread he was under of the treatment he had already experienced, made him tremble at the idea of falling again into the hands of the monks; and he perhaps took precautions that were unnecessary. He waited two days with the utmost inquietude, continually fearing some obstacle to his purpose, and dreading lest the water in its reflux should oppose his passage, and in the end destroy him.

But time however elapsed. He made use of the provisions he had left to strengthen himself, and soon after receiving a fresh supply from his purveyors, he recommended himself to their prayers, and summoning all his resolution, departed. After he had walked about a quarter of an hour, he perceived light at a considerable distance from him, and knew it to be that of day; but as he had long been immersed in darkness, he could not yet sustain its lustre, and therefore, after walking a few paces farther to enjoy the open air, he waited for the return of night.

The

The moment it arrived, he pursued his journey; but what was his grief and astonishment when he discovered that he was following that branch of the current which ended in the heart of the town. The fear of being discovered presented itself to his mind in all its horrors; which, together with the noise he heard, or thought he heard, made him return to the place he came from; here assuming fresh courage, and arming himself with patience, he endeavoured by the support of a stick he had found, to discover that branch of the current which ran into the country.

The hopes of regaining his liberty reanimating his exhausted strength, he walked with hasty, though trembling steps, and at last discovered what he sought for. He now quitted this place, and being enfeebled by the open air, threw himself on the grass which covered part of the fortifications of the town. He here ruminated on his unfortunate companions, sincerely regretting that they could not partake his felicity; and
recollecting

recollecting the scheme they had once formed, the money they had buried occurred to his memory. In consequence of this, he went in search of the place where it lay, and crossing the fossé, remembered the road that led to it; and finding it again, pursued his journey.

After he had walked the remainder of the night without making any great progress, he came to a wood, and being in great want of rest, stopped for some time. He now stripped himself of the tattered raiment he had on, which could be of no further use to him, and burying his money again, went to a neighbouring village. Here he begged for food, and rags to cover him; and some charitable people made him swallow a cordial, gave him a peasant's coat, and conducted him to a barn.

As he had not for a great while been so comfortably lodged, he plunged himself into the straw, and enjoying a sweet repose, proved how necessity enhances the value of the plainest accommodations. After he had
slept

slept about four hours, he awoke very much refreshed; and was just finishing a bit of bread, which had been given him, when he heard a voice he thought he knew; and going to a grated window, saw one of the brothers who had been instrumental in his punishment. His blood chilled at this sight; and he trembled lest his absence should have been the cause of the brother's coming into the country; but he was soon convinced his fears were groundless, by the friars declaring he was come into the village (which was only a mile and a half from the town) to beg alms. He afterwards heard him ask to lay in the barn the following night; which request being readily granted, he departed.

Vareuil, terrified at this rencounter, quitted the place in a few minutes, and returned to the wood he had left, where, supplied with fresh provisions, he dug up his money, and having refreshed himself by food and rest, pursued his journey the following night.

Fear, which never quitted him, the desire of getting forward, and the anxiety he
felt

felt to reach some place of safety, gave him courage to walk four miles ; at the end of which he begged to take shelter in a peasant's cottage. Here he passed all the morning of the following day ; either in sleeping, or in eating such provisions as he could find. After dinner he renewed his journey, which he continued the following night, and the next morning found he could go no farther without refreshment ; he now entered a little alehouse, where he was supplied with the coarse, though restorative food he had ordered, and being laid on a hard bed, which he fancied soft, slept soundly ; and when he awoke, felt a great renewal of strength. After having walked in this painful manner a month, now and then getting into a cart which was going the same road, he quitted the kingdom. He now purchased a decent dress, took carriage for Holland, and coming to Amsterdam, at last enjoyed the liberty he fought for ; lived in peace, and defied his persecutors.

While

While his money lasted, he never thought about the future; but when he found it almost gone, he began to be unhappy, as he knew no method of renewing it. He now wrote to his parents, related his deplorable history, and described in the most lively colours the torments he had endured, and the necessity of his flight; and then concluded his letter by imploring their assistance.

Monfieur and Madame Vareuil were amazed at the receipt of this letter, as they thought he was no more, (the monks having long before announced his death); but as they could not doubt his hand writing, they applied for further information. The monks were still more amazed; and at last replied, that having inflicted a trifling penance on Vareuil, he had found means to escape from his convent; and in order to spare a virtuous and respectable family the disgrace of having such a son, they had reported he was dead, little thinking he would have the assurance of writing to his parents, and of endeavouring to excite their compassion. This letter

letter was therefore looked on as a string of improbable lies ; and a base attempt to calumniate a community which had been already disgraced in the most atrocious manner by his conduct.

His father and mother made no scruple of believing all that was alledged by these monks, in whom they placed an unbounded confidence ; and therefore resolved to abandon a son whom they now looked on as a monster of iniquity. They answered his letter in the most bitter and reproachful terms, loaded him with maledictions (of which he was too long the victim,) and at last exhorted him to return to his convent in order to expiate his past offences, and make atonement for his apostacy. The superior had the assurance to join in this request ; deploring his transgressions, exhorting him to repentance, and representing the necessity of his returning to God, whom he had so grossly insulted. He invited him to return, assured him he would forgive all his misdemeanors and cruel calumnies, and concluded a letter
which

which was dictated by malice, with the utmost appearance of candour.

Vareuil, who had wished with the utmost impatience for an answer, and news from his native country, received the packet which contained these letters with a trembling hand: but what was his astonishment and indignation when he read their contents. In the first transport of his rage, he answered them with all the fury that resentment could dictate, and expressed himself in the most bitter and virulent terms. But what was he now to do?—he was in want of every thing, had no resources, and was in no situation to procure any. His landlord was not one of that sort of men who are inclined to pity the distressed; but on the contrary was rough and unfeeling to the last degree. He no sooner saw the state of Vareuil's finances, than he stripped him of best part of his apparel, and turned him out of doors. Poor, unfortunate, and friendless—where was he now to go? he had expected relief from his parents—had been cruelly disappointed—and was in a country

country where Frenchmen are held in no estimation; the principal part of those that go to Holland being sharpers, and therefore looked on as intruders who cast an odium on the country, by the numerous dupes they make. Thus circumstanced, Vareuil vented his tears and groans without being in the least regarded by a people who on all occasions give the preference to the protestant refugees, who come thither in crouds, and who bring with them the remembrance of a country they regret, and that of their former misfortunes; which may have perhaps increased the detail of the recitals they make in order to excite the pity of the Hollanders; as if they wished to confine their affection entirely to themselves. The only advantage their countrymen reaped by them was that of having diffused their language, and facilitated their being understood every where; and it was the only one that the melancholy Vareuil could enjoy. The recital of his misfortunes afforded him no consolation, and how could he implore the pity of the ministers of the

the reformed church, change his religion, and embrace theirs? for where would such a step have led him. Besides, they are not now so hasty as formerly in making profelites, as they are become too common, and the motives of these pretended conversions are too well known, to be either low or criminal. The situation of Vareuil was such that his motives would not have been judged very favorably of, and he was besides (strange as it may seem) attached to his religion, tho' by an inconceivable oddity, he respected and violated it continually.

In this situation perhaps he would have abandoned himself to the utmost despair, had he not by accident heard that they were levying troops for Batavia. The profession of arms, so different from that which he had quitted, and the resource of many who were of none, by no means intimidated him: he therefore ran to the admiralty, and presented himself before the commissary general; who being a man advanced in years, and remarkable for his humanity and beneficence, Va-
reuil

reuil trusted him with the history of his life; and begged to be admitted into the regiment which was to be sent to India; and then added, that he requested it as a further favor to be allowed his dismissal at the end of five years, in case he should desire it.

The Dutch commissary, who pitied his situation, gave him money, furnished him with necessaries for his voyage, and even gave him a letter of recommendation to the Governor of Batavia, who was his particular friend.

Vareuil, penetrated with the utmost gratitude for these unexpected favors, embarked with a chearful heart, and had a prosperous voyage, during the greatest part of which he did not even experience the common inconveniences, as the officers on board treated him with great attention and regard. But in proportion as they quitted Europe, and approached the place of their destination, they altered their conduct towards him, and forgot the injunctions of their Commissary.

The moment he arrived at Batavia, he exerted

exerted himself to the utmost in order to see the governor and deliver his letter of recommendation; but soon finding this scheme impracticable, he was obliged to commit it to the hands of strangers, and could never afterwards learn whether the governor had ever read it or not.

These governors have an unbounded authority; and though subjects in Europe, become tyrants in Asia, where they assume an astonishing pomp; as if tired of republican simplicity, they waited with impatience for the moment in which they could throw it off with impunity. This is a proof that men whose grandeur is limited to a certain time, are always the most desirous of enjoying it.

Vareuil, forsaken by the world, was now mixed with his companions in the Dutch army; which we must not judge of by the French, as its military discipline is of the most rigorous kind, every trifling fault being severely punished, and the utmost subordination observed: add to this, that the soldiers have many superiors who exact the
utmost

utmost obedience from them, and have a right to chastise them, which they generally do every day.

Vareuil lived in this state of humiliation and dread ten years, being often chastised in the severest manner for the most trifling offences, and at last fell into despair. Soured by disappointment, and wounded to the quick by the cruel and unjust treatment he received, he now grew weary of his life, and even regretted having left his dungeon. One day, when he had scarce recovered from the wounds he had received by running the gauntlet, a serjeant, seeing his cloaths ill brushed, struck him with his cane : this threw him into the greatest rage ; he flew upon his cruel oppressor, wrested his sword from him, broke it over his head, after he had wounded him several times, and left him in a dying condition.

When his anger subsided, he began to reflect on what he had done, and trembled at the risk he had run ; he now left the town with precipitation, and moved with the utmost

most dispatch, continually looking behind him, supposing he saw a detachment at his heels ready to seize him. He ran in this manner day and night for near six weeks, passing through immense deserts, subsisting on the roots and fruits he met with, and under the most dreadful apprehensions of falling into the hands of savages, who he was sure would soon inflict that death upon him from which he was endeavouring to fly. Distressed, terrified, and uncertain what to do, he at length came to the borders of the sea, without being able to determine whether he was leaving or approaching Batavia. As he knew not what road to take, he now darted into a forest he saw at some distance, and there lay concealed, trembling and dismayed at the least noise he heard, or the least object he saw.

As the unwholesome food he had eaten had extremely disordered him, and exhausted his strength, he was now pressed by hunger to such a degree, that his existence seemed intolerable, and he was on the point of plunging

plunging himself into the sea, when he met an old buffalo, deeply wounded, who fell down a few paces from him. Rejoiced at this accident, he immediately ran to the place where it lay, and putting an end to its life by the point of his sword, cut some pieces of it, and lighting a fire, broiled and eat them. Refreshed by this meal, he returned to the sea shore, and seeing a canoe, which by the ebbing of the tide was sticking in the sand, he formed a resolution which could only be dictated by despair,—this was, to commit himself, in this boat, to the mercy of the winds and waves, the moment the flowing of the tide should set it afloat; for which purpose he again returned to the forest, and cutting the buffaloe in pieces, broiled and carried it to the canoe by degrees.

On the return of the sea, he departed, and laboured hard to get to a great distance as soon as possible; but he had made only a small progress, when he

perceived three Indians on the sea shore, and heard them cry out, at seeing him go off with their boat. Terrified at this, Vareuil made use of his oars, (while they shot their arrows at him), and at length reached the open sea unhurt.

His resolution vanished, when he recollected he was now alone in the midst of an immense ocean in so wretched a bark as a small boat; and though the sky was still serene, and the water smooth, he trembled lest the weather should change; and the appearance of the smallest cloud struck him with terror. His eyes were alternately fixed on the sky and sea; and the least roughness of the latter filled him with the utmost dread lest it should portend a storm. The death which he had so lately sought, now appeared to him in all its horrors, and his mind was in perpetual agitation.

At the end of eight days (during which his inquietude was not in the least abated) he thought he saw something
 . very

very large at the edge of the horizon, and flattered himself with the idea of its being a ship. He now laboured with all his might to attain it, and having past the day in these vain efforts, trembled lest the night should deprive him of the object he was in pursuit of. At break of day, approaching it more nearly, he discovered it to be an elevated rock. Though he was greatly disappointed in his expectation, he still entertained some hopes of landing on it, (as the tide drove him that way), and next day finding it was not above two hundred paces from him, he endeavoured to reach the sand; but in so doing overfet his boat. He was now plunged into the sea; but soon coming up again, he swam to the foot of the rock, and with infinite difficulty climbed up to a part of it, beyond which he could not go; as he in vain sought for a passage, none being visible; and as the rock was steep on all sides, he set himself down and wept, expecting certain death.

When the sea however subsided, he descended on the sand, and walking round the rock, at last discovered an accessible part, and finding it was separated from him by water, he swam to the place, and climbing up it, came to an immense plain. Here he rested himself, and returned thanks to heaven; subsisting on the shell fish, which he found in great abundance, and which amply supplied the place of the food he had lost.

As his fears never quitted him, and as he was totally ignorant what part of the globe he was in, he neither dared to penetrate far into the country, nor to quit the sea shore, where he hoped to see some vessel that might snatch him from his impending fate: warmed by this idea, he cut down a long stick, and fastened his shirt to it, intending to make use of it as a signal, in case he should see a ship sailing that way, and then took up his abode in a cavern formed by nature.

After

After having remained in this solitude two months, he descried three ships; but fancying they were Hollanders, withdrew his signal, and returned to his cave with the utmost precipitation. He continued two years in this place, subsisting on shell fish, and walking with precaution and fear; some times amusing himself with picking up shells and stones of various colours, and arranging them in the form of landscapes.

At the beginning of the third year, an English vessel wanting water, came to seek it on this coast; and Vareuil, who implored the compassion of the sailors, was conducted to the captain. This captain (who spoke French) compassionated the misfortunes of Vareuil, and promised to take him to England. This promise, as he was proscribed France and Holland, gave him the utmost joy. When he embarked, the captain supplied him with provisions during his voyage, and on his arrival in England gave him some money.

This kind supply could not be supposed to last long; and Vareuil again sunk into his former poverty. A merchant to whom the captain had strongly recommended him, had indeed promised to provide for him some time or other; but opportunities do not always offer. He had by accident preserved three of the remarkable stones he had picked up in his desert, though he was ignorant what they were; but on showing them to his protector, he was informed they were three rough diamonds of uncommon beauty, and, by their size, of great value. Vareuil informed him how they came to be in his possession, and the merchant sold them for three thousand pounds sterling.

This fortunate stroke extricated Vareuil out of all his difficulties, and enabled him to enter into an advantageous trade, which soon increased his capital. He now assumed a decent
appear-

appearance, and business brought him acquainted with my father.—But here, said Madame Vareuil, his history must be blended with mine.

My father had, with the wreck of his fortune, as I have already said, taken shelter in England; but he had never, with all his care and industry, been able to attain a state of independancy. This being the case, he ordered me to accept an advantageous offer that was made me, and I complied, in spite of my repugnance to the match. After having lived unhappy two years, in a constant endeavour to do my duty, and in combating my disgust, my husband died, and left me a widow without children. M. de Vareuil conceived favourable sentiments of me at first sight, though our fortunes were very unequal; for my father could scarce support his credit, and my late husband had deprived me by will of half my income in case I married again. Notwithstanding this,

I loved Vareuil; and my father consented to our union, in spite of the difference of our religion, which is no obstacle in England, because the children are brought up according to the different persuasions of their parents; the sons following that of the father, and the daughters that of the mother.

Five years rolled on in sweet tranquillity, and every thing prospered with us. During this time, I felt marks of pregnancy, and became the happiest of beings; but at the end of five years, my father died, and his trade, in which we bore a part, and which was our only dependance, sustained great losses. This involved us in difficulties, and my husband became sad and thoughtful. I for six months saw him plunged into the deepest melancholy, and thought it was intirely owing to his sensibility; but in this I was mistaken; for on my urgent intreaties to be informed of the cause of his trouble, he related his history to me, of which I had hitherto been ignorant.

All

All is over, said he, on finishing his recital; and yet my situation inspires me with a project which may prove successful; you carry a child in your womb to whom I owe an establishment; I intend to secure it, and that even in its own country. I shall therefore write to my father, in order to recall if possible his natural affection, or at least to excite his compassion. I shall intreat him to obtain the abrogation of my vows at Rome. If I fail, as I fear I shall in trade, this dispensation will restore me to my rights, and I shall come in for a part of my father's property, which we will enjoy together if I live, and if I die it will prove a provision for a wife I love with the utmost tenderness.

During these words, he wept; and embracing me tenderly at their conclusion, immediately wrote to his father. He waited with impatience for an answer; but received none 'till he had

written three times, and that was only to deprive him of all hopes.

My pregnancy however advanced, and I in due time gave birth to Silvia—dear child! what floods of tears bedew'd her cradle, and how worthy was Vareuil of being a father! He now renewed his intreaties to his parents; but soon learned they had just before expired, reprobating and disinheriting him. No respect or regard now restraining him, he employed himself entirely in endeavouring to obtain an abrogation of his vows. He for this purpose made use of all the protection he could find at Rome; and money being wanted, exhausted all his resources to obtain it. This affair took up much time; and he at last found he stood in need of his brother's assistance. This being the case, he dared to confide in fraternal affection, though he had never seen his brother but during his infancy, and therefore wrote to him as follows:—

“ I now

“ I now labor under great misfortunes, and have passed all my life in disgrace and torture. You have superceded me in the affection of my parents. But I mean not to upbraid you, or to complain of their cruelty; nor do I wish to deprive you of your possessions. I only ask for a small part of my father’s property, which I have an equal claim to with yourself. This is the motive of my writing; and I hope my brother will not deny me so reasonable a request.”

His brother’s answer to this letter seemed very affectionate. He intreated him to be patient; assured him he might rely on his fraternal love; and excused himself from sending him any remittance by pleading certain embarrassments, and the unavoidable expences of a law suit in which he was then engaged. He seemed pleased with the steps Vareuil had taken at the court of Rome in order to obtain a release from his vows,
and

and concluded his letter by wishing him success, and hoping to see him soon.

My husband took it for granted that all these proofs of his brother's affection were founded in truth; and he was confirmed in this belief by some trifling sums of money he afterwards received. This false brother soon redoubled his protestations of friendship and regard, in a second letter, and desired to see him, saying there were many things they could regulate together which they could not do at a distance. He intreated him to reflect on this proposal, and contrive some means of undertaking his journey without danger, as he was (he said) confined by ill health, and unable to stir from home.

My husband was prevailed upon by these specious pretences—for being incapable of deceit himself, he conceived not the least suspicion of his brother; though, had he investigated the matter, he might have discovered that asking for a
part

part of that brother's property, would most probably bring his hatred upon him, if he proved to be a bad man. But a cruel fatality impelled him; and notwithstanding all he had suffered, and the experience he had had of the malignity of mankind, he fell into the snare laid for him. He formed his resolution immediately; and the manner in which he spoke to me of the project he had formed, precluded my making any reflections on the step he was about to take. My brother in law, in the mean time, wrote him word that he intended to consult intelligent men, and cite the monks to a tribunal of justice, in order to make them give an account of their conduct towards the unhappy brothers who had failed in their duty; and then added, that the judges and magistrates, who were enraged at the barbarity with which they had been treated, (of which there had been before examples), would labour to procure their liberty. Being
entirely

entirely ignorant of the danger to which my husband was going to expose himself, I only regretted his being obliged to be absent from me a month; for my daughter was too young to admit of my taking her with me, and my affection for her was too great to suffer me to leave her to the care of strangers.

M. de Vareuil therefore departed alone; and having taken proper precautions to prevent being known again, by changing his name, &c. arrived in a certain town in France, where he was met by his brother according to appointment. From this place he wrote me three letters successively; in which he repeatedly expressed his joy at his brother's kindness towards him, and the sanguine hopes he had conceived of obtaining a part of his father's property. He some time after this wrote to me again, and informed me, that he purposed seeing me in a short time, and that he should let me know, in a post or two, when he intended

intended to set out on his journey. For this letter I waited with anxious impatience for a fortnight; but it came not; and a month having elapsed in the same fruitless expectation, I went to the house of Monsieur N—— (the merchant I have already mentioned as the friend of my husband) and acquainted him with my apprehensions. He at first endeavoured to comfort me; but on my relating to him the history of my husband's life, he became very pensive, and seemed struck with a kind of horror. What you have told me, said he, makes me apprehensive of some treachery. But I may perhaps be mistaken. Do not therefore terrify yourself. I will write to my correspondents. What is the name your husband has assumed? That of d'Erville, replied I; his brother, who succeeded to his rights, bearing the family name.

Monsieur N—— wrote according to his promise; and in a month after received the following answer.

All

“ All the researches we have made after the person named d’Erville, terminate in the following account.—We were informed, at the inn where he lodged, that he had no intercourse with any body except M. Vareuil, who had only arrived in this town one day before him; and that they had quitted the place together, d’Erville not having been seen there since. Thinking M. d’Erville might be the man who some peasants had reported to have seen arrested the same day by people belonging to the Maréchaussée and compelled to enter a post-chaise, we took their informations, and followed the traces of the prisoner; but lost him at M——— where M. Vareuil generally resided, and whither he returned, after having paid the expences at the inn, and taken away the portmantau of his friend, who he said was gone to England.”

This letter increased my inquietude to torture, as I well knew the place where
they

they had lost the traces of the pretended d' Erville was his own country, and the place where he had unhappily been a monk. I now no longer doubted but that my husband had been surprized and carried back to his convent, and immediately prepared for my departure. I collected all the money I could find, sold most of my effects, pawned those I could not sell, put my daughter into a boarding-school, and recommending her to the care of Monsieur N—— took his letters of credit, and departed for M——

The correspondents of my friend the merchant, received me with great cordiality, especially one whose name was d'Abol, and who excited my confidence by his generous and obliging manner. Being a stranger and alone, in need of support and advice, I told him the cause of my journey, and received great consolation from him, his feelings for me not being confined to mere words— He offered me all the assistance in his power,

power, treated me with the utmost kindness, and insisted on my accepting an apartment in his house. As his wife joined in this request, though she was unacquainted with my history, I could not refuse their offer, and therefore took up my abode with them.

I now prepared (by the advice of Monsieur d' Abol, who did not in the least doubt but that my husband was in the hands of his cruel tyrants), to pay a visit to my brother in law, who could alone give me any light into this dark transaction. I was announced to him by the name of Madame Vareuil, and was with great difficulty admitted into his presence. Madam, said he coldly, the moment he saw me enter, what business have you here? I have but one brother, and as that brother is a monk, he cannot be married. Just Heaven! exclaimed I, to what an extremity am I reduced! and then addressing myself to my brother in law, I said, can this be possible sir? can you indeed be ignorant

ignorant of the unhappy adventures of this brother? or do you dare to pretend ignorance of them? Have you forgot the letters you wrote to him, and the professions of affectionate regard they contained? In them you called me sister—the wife of your unhappy brother—and am I thus received! I know not what you mean, replied he. I had a brother once, who escaped from his convent, and gave himself up to libertinism; but I know not what is become of him, and if I was to own all the sisters in law he has given me, I should never have done. Barbarian! exclaimed I, be satisfied with having given me a cool reception; do not insult me, for I apprehend cruel treachery in your conduct, and fear you have delivered up your unfortunate brother into the hands of his executioners.—Which were I certain of—But I restrain my suspicions, as such an accusation has need of proofs.—I will search for them, however; and

and if they are against you, tremble!—You know me not—I am not one of those who groan and weep, but I will be revenged!

Saying these words, I darted a look at him that threw him into confusion; and immediately returned to M d'Abol, in order to acquaint him with the ill success I had met with.

As the conduct of my brother in law on this occasion, increased his suspicions as well as mine, we each resolved to make enquiries. My impatience was such, that I borrowed a gown of Madame d'Abol immediately, put on one of those cloaks called a capote, and almost covering my face with the hood of it, went to the church belonging to the monastery of — the situation of which I had been previously informed of. Here I spent some time in examining every nook and corner, in order to slip into the convent unperceived; but having remained there a great while, I was at length left alone; and being
alarmed

alarmed by the sound of footsteps advancing towards me, I entered a dark chapel. Here I cast my eyes towards that side which was light, and perceived my brother in law, with a monk, coming towards the place where I was. Terrified at their approach, and solicitous to conceal myself, I now darted into the first confessional I could find, and heard the following conversation.

I wish to put you on your guard, reverend father, said the unworthy brother of my husband, for the wife of the apostate is arrived, and has been to see me. She seems possessed of great resolution, and strongly suspects our conduct. What does that signify, replied the monk, since he is now safe in our hands, out of which he can never escape: the secrecy with which our proceedings are managed, precludes all fear, and enables us to give out that he is dead. But every thing may yet be discovered, said my brother in law, should any one be so imprudent as to mention this affair, or
should

should he again escape! Make yourself perfectly easy on that head, rejoined the monk; he has indeed once deceived us by an event of chance, but the increase of the tide cannot now reach his habitation, nor can the dungeon in which he is now confined yield to any human efforts. The secrets of the community are impenetrable; they are confined to a certain number of the fathers; and the woman you mention, and who pretends to be his wife, will find all her efforts to get him out of our hands fruitless. Be therefore under no apprehensions, but be assured that you have done the church an essential service in giving up to it a guilty wretch who was in the road to perdition, and whom you have furnished with an opportunity to make his peace with Heaven.

They continued their discourse on this head for some time, to my great mortification—for being informed of all I
desired

desired to know, every moment seemed an age; especially as I was in a confined posture, and trembled lest I should be discovered. But at length, after I had waited a great while with the height of impatience for their departure, they quitted the place.

Being now perfectly informed where I was to seek for my husband, I returned to the house of my friend, totally engrossed by a thousand different ideas. M d'Abol received me with joy, as he was apprehensive my brother in law would have had me watched, and would by that means have increased my distress. I instantly informed him of what I had heard, and declared my intention of calling the monks to an account in a court of judicature for their cruel treatment of my husband: but he disapproved of the step, as it would prove fruitless, and only be productive of much noise, saying, that the monks would thereby be put still more on their guard, and
 hat

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the vows of my husband being looked on as an insurmountable obstacle, my marriage with him would be looked on as void according to the laws of France. He added, that the only thing I could hope for, was a pension from my brother in law, and that would be looked on as a favor done me.

But the principal thing was to extricate the unfortunate Vareuil from his captivity. Address could only do this. But what method could effect this purpose? He however recommended it to me to go no more to the convent, lest I should by that means expose myself to dangers from which nothing could protect me.

These words threw me into a state of reflection, and induced me to inquire into the customs of the monks of his convent; which being informed of, and comparing them with those I had heard my husband mention, I resolved to labour for his deliverance. As I
foresaw

foresaw my sex would be an impediment to this undertaking; after a few minutes reflection, I determined to disguise myself, and assume the habit of a man, which M. d'Abol furnished me with, after my having told him I had no motive for my change of habit but that of going to every place where men were admitted. He recommended it to me strongly to be upon my guard, and not to run the risk of tempting any of the monks by presents, as they might only receive them in order to betray me. This advice I promised to follow.

Disguised in the habit of a man, I went the next day to the before mentioned church, and was requested to attend during one mass; but I declined it, saying, I was in a hurry. As I observed this answer was very ill received, I formed the design of getting all the prayers, &c. of the Romish service by heart; and the ardor with which I applied to this study, soon made me mistress of it. I had, it is

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true, some repugnance in so doing; but I thought the motive which impelled me to it, excused the deed. Great God!—Eternal Being!—exclaimed I at the time—I serve thee in the ground of my heart; but I have to do with men; therefore enlighten, protect, guide, and pardon me.

During this time, I attended at every service, examined every thing with the utmost attention, and familiarized myself with all the ceremonies, so as not to be surprized. As my assiduity, attention, and zeal, in attending mass so frequently, made me become known in the monastery, the house porters gave me free admission, and the gardens were opened at my approach. I became acquainted with some of the fathers; entered into serious and edifying conversations with them, and went into their apartments, but could not as yet discover what I so ardently desired to know.

Tired at length of taking so many
fruitless

fruitless steps, my impatience suggested to me a project, which though very hazardous, was the only one I could undertake; this was, to get myself incorporated into the society, and become a monk. A small sum of money I had in my possession, seemed sufficient to remove all difficulties that might arise on the occasion; but as I was a stranger, and alone, I saw plainly a surety would be required, and therefore opened my mind to M. d'Abol. He endeavoured in vain to dissuade me from so hazardous an enterprise, and even urged some religious scruples against it, But I continued resolute; and at last obtained his consent.

When I assumed the habit of a man, I took the name of Silvestre; by which name I announced myself at the confessional the next day, and asked to speak with the superior; I here told him that I came from a distant province, and was born of honest, though indigent parents; that I had long lived servant with a fo-

reign officer, and had by frugality amassed the sum of a hundred louis d'or; adding, that as I had nothing so much at heart as my salvation, I was resolved to enter into a monastic and tranquil way of life, and was come to consult him on that head.

The hundred louis d'or had their desired effect. The superior commended my pious resolution, and exhorted me to take the habit in his convent; but nevertheless desired to know whether any responsible person in the town would attest the truth of what I had told him concerning my birth, and answer for my integrity. When I mentioned M d'Abol he seemed satisfied, and exhorted me to come to him again. I now returned to my friend, in order to suggest to him what answers he was to make when he was questioned on my account. In a word, every thing succeeded to my wish, and I was admitted a probationer. In this state I remained some months, which appeared to me so many ages;

ages; affecting great zeal, and attending the superior without ceasing, to whom I seemed to open my whole soul. He at last began to place a confidence in me; and when I intreated him to abridge the time of my probation, he said, ah! my son! I fear you will repent, and will one day become disgusted with your situation, for we have had apostates before now. I affected amazement at these words. Can it be possible, reverend father, said I, with zealous rage—O! the monsters!—why do they not fall into my hands? for it would be serving heaven to inflict, and even to crush them, as there can be no punishment adequate to their crimes.

All I said on this subject seemed to give great pleasure to the superior, who, after a few more earnest solicitations on my part, permitted me to enter into my noviciate, which was to last a year. How dreadfully long did this period appear to me! I am still amazed at my patience and circumspection during this time; un-

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der the same roof with my husband, knowing him to be wretched, and in need of my assistance, being a torture inexpressible! His image followed me every where; and it required nothing less than my extreme attachment, and the hopes I had of effecting a purpose so near my heart, to support me under so heavy a trial.

The year at last elapsed, and I made not the least hesitation in pronouncing vows which I knew could not bind me. As my zeal, my assiduities, and attention, had prepossessed the superior in my favour as well as the elders of the community, whom I had taken great care to please; their kindness, and professions of friendship to me were unbounded; though I could not yet obtain the intelligence I wanted.

The time however at length arrived, when I was to reap the fruits of my perseverance. A brother of our community happening to die at the end of the fourth
year

year of my sufferings, the superior sent for me to his cell.—Silvestre, said he, as I entered, I am about to give a strong proof of the confidence I place in you—I am going to let you into some of our secrets. But you must promise not to betray me. On which I threw myself at his feet, and promised and swore to all that he bid me; after which he continued as follows.—

You know, brother Silvestre, that we have had apostates among us. Impious wretches, who have forsaken the worship of the true god, and have sacrificed to their passions! Some of these have fallen again into our hands, and our religion and duty have obliged us to punish them according to their deeds. We conceal them from the sight of the rest of our brothers, lest they should prove objects of offence to them; and they live in dark and secret dungeons, where they have an opportunity of expiating their crimes by repentance. Brother Ambrose, who used to carry these wretches their food and

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drink,

drink, having just now expired, I give this office to you, because, though you are but lately entered into our community, you have engaged my confidence. But tremble at abusing it; as your liberty must prove the sacrifice. Let no foolish weakness induce you to pity these wretches. But I fear nothing with regard to the virtuous Silvestre—he cannot oppose eternal vengeance.

I now discovered so much submission to his will, and so much aversion against those he called apostates, that he told me he would himself conduct me to the place. He then ordered me to go and fetch the bread and water I was to carry to the prisoners, which was kept ready by a father he named to me.

I flew rather than ran to execute his commission—the only one I could perform with pleasure. I was now to approach my husband, to succour and relieve him.—With what impatience had I not waited for this moment!—with what ardor had

I not longed for this interview! On my return to the superior, he ordered me to follow him, and I pursued his steps to the bottom of the garden, where he opened a door hid by an hedge of yoke-elm, and by a statue of the patron of the convent, which I had not before observed; and shutting it after him, we descended an hundred steps, at the bottom of which staircase was a door of extraordinary thickness, through which we entered into a hollow way, far from broad, but very long; here we found a dungeon, where I left a part of my provision with a prisoner who sighed and groaned very deeply and pronounced some interrupted words, but whom I did not distinguish by his voice to be my husband. On my rejoining the superior, he told me there was yet another prisoner whom we were to visit; one who was much more criminal—one who had eluded their vigilance, and had made his escape into a land of heretics, where he married, in

contempt of his vows. O, what a monster! cried I; and do you still pity him?

We now lifted up a sort of trap door, and descending another staircase, opened a door. Here I saw an iron cage, in which the prisoner could only abide in a sitting posture, and here heard the unfortunate Vareuil speak thus.—O! my dear Fidelia! said he (that being my name) what is become of you?—and thou, my poor Silvia! who hadst but just received thy birth, when thou wert abandoned by thy father, and robbed of his succour! ye are now, perhaps, a prey to the most abject poverty!—Dear objects of affection! you are never absent from my remembrance—do you still live, and do you still think of me? A shuddering now seized me—my knees trembled—and I was ready to sink—but the darkness with which we were surrounded prevented the superior's observing my situation. I however instantly collected myself, feeling the necessity of so doing, as I might
 now

now lose the labour of five years; the excess of misfortune, and the hopes of putting an end to it, restoring my resolution, and enabling me to perform in silence what I had begun. On our quitting the place, I assumed so cool and tranquil a countenance, that the superior embraced me, and said I should for the future carry the sustenance for these wretches alone. Eight days was the period their bread and water was to last—how tedious was this time to me!

As I feared being observed; I determined to avoid speaking to my husband; especially as his surprize at seeing me again might perhaps, in his weak state, prove fatal to him. I therefore supplied myself with paper and pencil, a wax light and a box, in which I put up what was necessary to make a fire, and then in a disguised hand wrote the following letter.—

“ There is one in this monastery who interests himself in your behalf, and pities
your

your wife and child, who are still living. Make use of the implements for writing I have brought you, and be assured your letter shall be safely delivered according to its direction. In case the brother who brings you this billet, should not be sent next week with your provisions, be on your guard, and do not betray yourself—you will know your friend by his speaking the following English words, *Hope comes to all*; to him deliver your answer boldly, and depend on Providence for the rest. Steps are already taken for your delivery; and the greatest difficulty, which was that of getting at you, is over."

At the stated time, I flew to the dungeon, saying, Vareuil, I feel for your distresses; take this letter, and this box, [which contains what is necessary to supply you with a light; act according to the directions contained in the letter, and eat the food I have brought you, which will by degrees restore your strength. What generous soul (exclaimed

ed the unfortunate Vareuil, in a feeble tone) thus nobly exerts itself in my favour? can it be one of our monks? Peace! replied I, we may be observed; and then quitted him with an aking heart, feeling the necessity of so doing.

As I was, on quitting this place, to carry the keys back to the superior, I immediately took their impression on wax; and fearing lest my husband should be discovered with a light by their going into the prison unawares, I staid with the father (who held the keys very tight) all the morning.

As he was this afternoon to pay visits in the town, I was sent out in quality of brother, to gather alms; which employment facilitating my coming in and going out, enabled me to pay a visit to Monsieur d'Abol, whom I had not seen for some time, and to whom I carried the impression I had taken of the keys. He rejoiced at the success of my enterprize, and said, heaven itself seemed
to

to approve my resolution and fortitude, by its enabling me, in spite of the dreadful obstacles which opposed me, to approach my husband. Your courage will certainly save him, added he; and I will, as I have promised, do all in my power to assist you. He now undertook to have the keys made according to the impression, and money facilitated the scheme; the next day they were ready, and delivered into my hands. No words can express my joy on this occasion, as I had it now in my power to set Vareuil at liberty, and to be united to him for ever.

I spent the rest of the week in meditating on the project I had formed, and examined every part of the garden; which I found at the extremity of the monastery, and on one side, joined to a private street. The wall indeed was high; but the ladders, of which there were a great plenty for pruning the trees that covered it with their branches, might reach it. With this discovery I acquainted M. d'Abol, who

who concerted measures with me, and gave me some files. These I carried to my husband at the appointed time, saying, *Hope comes to all.* Generous man! replied he, here is my letter. Take this habit, cried I, interrupting him, and make use of these files in silence to saw your bars afunder, and open yourself a passage on that side of your prison which is opposite to the place where you receive your food; in a week you shall be free, and I will come and fetch you at night. Pity my fate, replied he, in a voice scarce audible; you may not perhaps accomplish what you have so generously undertaken, and I may not, as my strength is just exhausted, be able to profit by your kindness. You must recall your strength, rejoined I, on the instant, you must exert yourself to the utmost; and then exhorting him to do as I desired, left him.

I now hurried back to the house of Monsieur d'Abol, in order to read the letter my husband had given me with
greater

greater safety, and found the contents to be as follows.

“ Compaffionate unknown, who fo generously intereft yourself in my favour, make all the hafte you can in order to affift me, left your fuccour fhould come too late. As you may perhaps know my wife and daughter, communicate my misfortunes to them, and in the name of God endeavour to confole them. What muft have been the diftrefs of my Fidelia at my not having written to her for fo long a time? I tore myfelf from her arms in order to procure her an happier fituation. But alas!—a brother, a barbarous brother has betrayed me, and plunged me into this abyfs of woe! He at firft treated me with every mark of friendship and regard, preffed me in his arms, affured me I might firmly rely on his brotherly affection, and told me he would do every thing in his power to ferve me. The laft time I faw him, he prevailed on me to accompany him out of town, and drawing
me

me towards a wood, entered into a confidential discourse with me, which on his part seemed to be dictated by innocence and truth, as it really was on mine. A troop of horse soon came up to us, and laying hands on me, my brother fled. I endeavoured to recall him, but in vain, and was soon dragged to the convent, where I was thrown into this dungeon, and loaded with the bitterest abuse. Oh! my wife! my daughter! what will become of you?—and what will become of me? the remembrance of you increases my ills, and I cannot, without shuddering, think of your fate. Just Heaven! let all your vengeance fall on me, and spare these dear objects of my affection! Oh, preserve, support, and bless them! My strength decays apace; my eyes, for so long a time deprived of light, can scarce sustain the feeble rays of a candle; it is with difficulty that I write these lines; my body is in a deplorable state, and my soul is in no better. Generous stranger, let this letter

letter be conveyed to my Fidelia, and endeavour to procure me my liberty, if that can possibly be effected; as my only motive for wishing for it is the ardent desire I feel to see my wife once more, and to expire in her arms! Adieu!—I expect every thing from your exertions, and from the mercy of Heaven!”

I could not finish this letter without shedding a torrent of tears; the despair of Vareuil plunging a dagger into my breast, as I felt the necessity of hastening my project, without being able to execute it in less than a week. At the return of night, his image haunted me perpetually. My imagination represented his situation in all its horrors, and I became almost delirious. By an involuntary movement, and by an impulse too strong to be resisted, I ran into the garden and attempted to open the door of it, in order to see and to console my husband; but found it locked, and the key taken away. I now bitterly regretted my not having taken an impression of this
key

key also. I returned with an aking heart, and the next day acquainted M. d'Abol with the circumstance, and the obstacle I had met with.

Unfortunate Fidelia! said he, you were on the point of destroying all your purposed happiness! Had you made yourself known to your husband in his present weak state, it would have caused a revolution in his frame that he could not have been equal to. He must have sunk under the weight of so unexpected a stroke, and you must have sunk by his side! You must this evening get possession of the garden key, I will at nine o'clock be in the street which joins to the garden wall, and will have a ladder ready by the side of the last tree.

As the fathers must not attend the choir this night, here is something that you must pour into their drink in order to make them sleep. Do not discover yourself to your husband 'till you are safe in my house, and arm yourself with that resolution.

resolution and courage which you have already given such strong proofs of.

These words inspired me with new vigour. I returned to the convent in order to prepare the wine the fathers were to drink, attended them at supper, and soon perceived the effects of the soporific mixture I had put into their bottles; in fine, they all retired to rest before their accustomed time, and the whole community were soon locked in the arms of sleep.

At half an hour past eight, I seized the key of the garden door, hastened to my husband's dungeon, changed my dress, and making him change his own, I compleated the opening he had endeavoured to make. I now drew him gently out of this horrid place, fastened the door after us with the utmost precaution, and led him a few paces: but when he came into the open air, he fainted away, and remained insensible in spite of all my efforts to recall him.

What were my feelings at this moment!
for

for all my scheme of happiness seemed fled, and the most poignant anguish filled my heart! I seized a ladder, placed it against the garden wall, run up it to see whether Monsieur d'Abol was at the place appointed, and perceiving him there, cried out, help me, or I am lost for ever! He came immediately to my assistance, descended into the garden, and gave me all the succour in his power. But Vareuil remained insensible in spite of our united efforts to recall him, and scarce showed any signs of life. At this moment my resolution returned. I took my husband up on my shoulders, mounted the ladder, and arrived at the top of the wall; but when there, I knew not how to carry him over it without danger, and to reach the ladder placed on the other side with safety. M. d'Abol, astonished at what I did, assisted me to the utmost of his power, and supporting Vareuil, enabled me to pass the wall. I now collected all my strength, reached the bottom

rom of the ladder in safety, and walked with an agility that amazed Monsieur d'Abol, who followed me. We arrived at the lone house which had been long before prepared for our reception; we were conducted into a private apartment, where Vareuil was put to bed, and where every thing was done to recall him to life. My strength, which had hitherto seemed to increase every moment, sustained by my imagination, my resolution, and my fears, now abandoned me, and I fainted away. In this state I remained a great while; and it proved dangerous in proportion to the great efforts I had made.

This has convinced me that nothing is impossible to strong passions, and that the soul in its elevation can do things beyond conception; but then its fall, through the weakness of human nature, must be great in proportion to its uncommon exertions.

The assiduities of M. d'Abol at length brought me to myself; when I reassumed
the

the habit of my sex, in order to screen myself from the monks, and disappoint the researches they would doubtless make after me.

My husband could not be recalled to life 'till some hours after; and he was then in so languishing a state, that the physician who was called in to his assistance despaired of his life. He was returning M. d'Abol a thousand thanks for his unexampled goodness, when I appeared. Great God! said he, it is Fidelity!—It is my wife!—I see her—I embrace her—and I die contented! He was now again falling into his former insensibility, when I prevented him by my shrieks and tears. Just Heaven! exclaimed I, is this the fruit of all my labours! is this the reward of all my pains! have you restored him to me for a moment only to snatch him from me for ever!

The enfeebled and astonished Vareuil now desired to be informed by what means I had been able to find him out,
and

and by what happy circumstance I had entered into his chamber. Ah! replied I, can you then suppose that I could live without you? can you suppose that I would remain in England, unmindful of your fate? No!—I made every possible enquiry about you; pursued you to France; entered into your convent; assumed the habit of a man, and took the oaths like you. It was I who delivered you from your captivity; it was I who supplied you with implements for writing; and I was the brother who brought you your last provisions.

Amazed—terrified—and enchanted by turns; Vareuil now asked for a further explanation; of which when he was informed, he exclaimed—Oh, prodigy of love!—Oh, miracle of constancy!—Oh, Fidelia! I owe you all, and wish to live in order to reward you!—But alas! it cannot be! As this conversation seemed to renew his strength, some hopes were conceived of his recovery; but at break
of

of day they all vanished ; and Vareuil expired, regretting my fate and that of his daughter, whom he recommended to my care with transports of affection, and endeavoured to divert my grief by offering me an object equally worthy of my attention.

No words can describe my despair on this occasion. M. d'Abol took upon him my husband's funeral ; and for this purpose communicated our history in confidence to the curé of the parish. This priest, who pitied my situation, and who was a man of liberal sentiments, procured my husband's interment, and gave the necessary certificates of it to me.

I could with difficulty sustain this stroke. I for some days remained in a state between life and death ; during which time the care and assiduity of M. d'Abol was unremitted. You have a daughter, (said he to me at last, when he perceived me rather better) a daughter who has no other stay than you. Can you resolve to abandon your child?—can you forget the injunctions of your dying

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husband, who so strongly recommended her to your attention?—and can you resolve to die rather than obey him? This discourse made a deep impression on me, and awakened me out of the lethargy into which the death of my husband had thrown me. I now recollected I had a child, and nature whispered that I was a mother. I now began to be uneasy with regard to the fate of my daughter, as I had heard nothing of her for a great while; and longed for the perfect re-establishment of my health, that I might return to England and seek after her. As soon as I was able to travel, M. d'Abol took me back to his wife, who knew nothing of my fatal adventures, and informed her I was just returned from a journey.

While I was endeavouring to obtain the perfect re-establishment of my health in this worthy family, the monks whom I had quitted were making strict search after me, and the flight of brother Silvestre was noised abroad. The superior and elders of the community, who shuddered at being a se-

cond

cond time deprived of their victim, loaded me with imprecations, and were inconsolable at thus becoming my dupes. They came frequently to the house of M. d'Abol, in order to complain of the conduct of his protégé, and had strong suspicions, tho' they could give no answer to M. d'Abol when he alledged he had himself been deceived with regard to me.

The superior, who visited frequently in this family, happening to hear my voice one day, retired without saying a word, and going to a magistrate, lodged a complaint against M. d'Abol for giving shelter to a fugitive brother belonging to his convent, whom he loudly demanded of him again. The magistrate, who knew the character of M. d'Abol to be irreproachable, and that he was incapable of giving sanction to a young libertine, being himself a remarkably pious man, thought the superior's suspicions ill founded; but as he still persisted in his demand, he took a troop of archers with him, and accompanied by the monk, went to M. d'Abol.

The house was immediately surrounded; every pass was guarded; and six men entered with the monk and magistrate. The moment M. d'Abol was informed of their business, he appeared before them with great composure, answered all their questions with calmness, and gave up his keys. They now visited every part of his house, opened every door, pryed into every corner, and made the most scrupulous researches in vain. They at last came to the apartment of Madame d'Abol, where I was busied in some occupations peculiar to my sex, and where the superior, after looking at me for some minutes, recollected my face, and cried out to the magistrate, that is brother Silvestre! — that is the apostate I am in search of! I see nobody here, replied the magistrate, except two ladies at work. You are deceived (exclaimed the monk in a rage) that female habit is a trick—a device to conceal brother Silvestre—and coming towards me he offered to take hold of me. What is the meaning of all this? father, cried I (starting up and

and pushing him from me with great firmness) is it in character, think you, to behave thus to one who is totally ignorant of every thing you have been talking about?

Madame d'Abol, who was far from suspecting the truth, now burst into a violent fit of laughter, and said—spare me this brother, I beseech you, for I cannot do without him; tho' I did not know he was a run-away; and shall blame M. d'Abol for giving him shelter here.

While the magistrate knew not what to make of this scene, and the superior kept crying out I was really brother Silvestre, I went up to the former, and intreated him to deliver me from the extravagancies of a man who must certainly be deprived of his senses or he could not thus—— Pay no regard to what he says (interrupted the unfeeling monk) for his dress belies his sex.

As the magistrate replied that that might be easily known, anger darted from my eyes; and I exclaimed, this is an insult not to be borne!—but if a stranger—a woman,

is to be treated with such indignity, let the room be cleared, and let women be called in for my justification, if Madame d'Abol's word is not to be taken. I then added, that I insisted on the superior's being punished for his injustice and audacity. The monk now bound himself by the strongest asseverations to submit to the most dreadful punishment in case he had accused me falsely, and then pulled me by the arm, in order to deliver me into the hands of the soldiers. In my struggle to disengage myself from his grasp, which I did with all the strength that I was mistress of, my neck handkerchief, which was but slightly pinned, as I was in a dishabille, slipped off, and made me blush like scarlet; while the monk, who had occasioned the accident, was, tho' from a very different motive, thrown into equal confusion.

The magistrate, who was now greatly incensed, apologized to me, and to Monsieur and Madame d'Abol, for what had happened, and then ordered the superior to withdraw.

No

No words can describe the monk's fury on this occasion, the testimony of his own eyes being scarce sufficient to convince him of his error. He however returned to me at last, and begged my pardon with a very ill grace. I grant you the pardon you ask for, replied I. But I have other crimes to alledge against you. I am the wife of Vareuil, and insist on having my husband restored to me. Should you not comply with my request, I will make you tremble! I will apply to the court of Rome, will obtain a dissolution of his vows, and you shall answer for his non appearance. Alas! replied the terrified superior, with an hypocritical air, I know nothing of him. Brother Silvestre has contrived to deprive us of him, and it is to him you must apply; indeed I even now doubt my senses; but you may be the sister of Silvestre. As I held this monk in sovereign contempt, and even trembled at his presence, I sent him back with scorn, and regretted it was not in my power to punish him according to his barbarous treatment of my husband.

This affair (which was soon circulated throughout the town) caused many ludicrous jests against the fathers; and my brother-in-law, when he was informed of my husband's flight, (whose fate he was ignorant of) discovered the utmost consternation; as he feared he might have obtained the dispensation of his vows, and might return and demand a part of his property.

Being at length in a condition to undertake my journey for England, I prepared for it; and M. d'Abol exhorted me to return with my daughter to France, as her presence might soften the heart of her uncle, and induce him to be kind to her. She will at least, said he, interest humanity in her favor, as the unhappy victim of her father's misfortunes, and excite commiseration in case you should be obliged to prosecute Vारेuil in a court of judicature. This advice, which I knew to be dictated by disinterested friendship, I listened to with complacency; and determining to follow it, was impatient to be gone, as I longed to embrace my daughter,

ter, whom I had not seen for a long while, and who was greatly endeared to me by the loss of her father.

My affairs were soon arranged, and Monsieur d'Abol accompanied me to R——, where I took shipping for England, and arrived in London in a few days. I now flew to the house of the merchant whom I have already mentioned, and to whose care I had committed Silvia; but found he had been dead two years, and that his son, who had quitted business, was set off on a long journey, without having fixed the time of his return. This intelligence cut me to the heart, as I knew not what was become of my child. I flew to the boarding-school where I had left my daughter, and finding she was not there, desired to see Mrs. Love, (for that was the name of the mistress) and when she entered, repeatedly asked for Silvia. She seemed greatly embarrassed at my presence, hesitated in her speech, and was at a loss to answer me; when all the mother immediately rushing into my heart, I burst

into tears, and again feebly demanded—
where is my child?

Madam, said Mrs. Love at last, living at a great expence, I could not afford to keep your daughter without being paid for her board; therefore when Monsieur N— died, I sent her, strongly recommended, to the parish. Good God! exclaimed I, do I live to see this day!—is my daughter supported by public charity, and mingled with the poor, while I have wherewith to maintain her! Oh! my dear Vareuil! what pangs would this event have given thee! But thy concerns have long engrossed all my attention, and have long caused me to forget I was a mother!

Without saying another word, and without bidding the mistress of the boarding-school adieu, I ran to the charity-school, and entering it with a palpitating heart, cast my eyes on every side. Madam, said I to the governess, what is become of my daughter?—restore her to me—I am alive—I will provide for her—she shall not stand in need of the humiliating succour of a charity-school,

or be any longer maintained by the public. The governess, who did not know me, desired me to explain myself more clearly, as she said she did not understand my meaning. This provoked me; as I could not be convinced but that I had explained myself fully. I demand my daughter Silvia of you! said I—that daughter Mrs. Love committed to your charge two years ago.—She is mine—you must restore her to me—I must see—I must embrace and weep over her—I must deplore her father's fate, and my own wretchedness! The governess, who was now moved by what I had said, replied, she had a girl of the name I had mentioned, whom Mrs. Love had brought to her about two years before, and immediately introduced her:—but in what a state?—oh Heavens!—I ran into her arms, I pressed her to my bosom, I wept over her and kissed her a thousand times. Unfortunate daughter!—dear Silvia! image of an husband I adored!—do I then see you again!—do I then press her to my bosom! I could say no more for some minutes;

nutes; but at length continued—you are now ignorant of the extent of your woes, and of your mother's pangs. Your youth prevents your seeing all the horrors of her situation, and joining her sobs and tears.

Silvia now pressed me in her little arms, and wept upon my bosom. My dear mother! said she, I am sure you are my mother!—how glad am I to see you again!—will you never leave me—will you always take me with you?—shall I always be able to embrace you?—wicked Mrs. Love; she told me you was dead—why did she tell a lie?

Her tender careffes, her infantine discourse, and unaffected simplicity, threw me into a state of grief, languor, and satisfaction not to be described. My greedy eyes had hitherto distinguished nothing but her. She occupied every faculty of my soul, and my senses seeming dead, the throbbings of my heart alone proved my existence. But when this tumult and conflict between body and mind subsided, surrounding objects struck me in their usual manner, and I saw my
daughter

daughter covered with a coarse cloth, which indicated poverty and disgrace. This appearance inspired me with indignation, and I turned away my eyes, exclaiming, can this be my Silvia!—Oh! Vareuil! if you behold this object—if your affection for your child has followed you to the tomb—what must be your feelings at this moment!—Would she have been thus if you had lived? Poor child, thou hast no longer a father!

I could say no more; my losses presenting themselves to my imagination in their full extent. The governess seemed to feel for and pity my situation: but when I made a motion to withdraw, and take away my daughter, she spoke thus:—I make no doubt of your being the mother of this child, Madam, said she; but it is absolutely necessary that Mrs. Love should confirm your claim, and that the director of this house should give his consent to your taking away your daughter. How! interrupted I with precipitation, am I to be deprived of my child?—am I, who am her mother, to be separated from

from her? nobody has any right over her while I live, but those to whose care I shall commit her—I therefore claim her as my own, and will not part with her.

But alas! my efforts, my tears, my supplications, and even my threats, were vain. I was obliged to leave my daughter at the charity-school; and being animated by rage, went immediately to Mrs. Love. Madam, said I, the moment I saw her, you have disposed of my child without my being privy to it!—I claim her at your hands, and expect you will repair the injury you have done me, by going with me directly, and proving my claim as a mother!—You do not fly, Madam—were you thus tardy when you wanted to be rid of my daughter?

Mrs. Love, who was astonished at my impatience, and sensible of her error, seemed greatly confused. I held the empire of reason over her, and nature pleaded my cause. Having dressed herself with speed, she followed me to the charity-school, spoke to the governess, and went with me to the director,
who

who was not to be spoken with then, and who sent us word that we must come the next day. My impatience was now at its height. I prayed, I intreated, and conjured, but all to no purpose. Ah! Madam! cried I to Mrs. Love, you have been the cause of all my present distress, and you ought to do your utmost to extricate me from it.—We must return to-morrow—indeed we must. You are in duty bound to assist me. To-morrow!—what a tedious interval!—unfortunate Silvia!

I spent the rest of the day with my daughter, being unable to separate myself from her; but night came at last, and I was compelled to quit both her and the charity-school. I returned to it the next day at a very early hour, and finding it shut up, thought all the world infected with drowsiness except myself. What an early riser you are, Madam? said the governess, when the door was opened; the director won't be stirring this great while. Ah! were you a mother, replied I, you would not wonder at my impatience.

I will

I will wait till the director rises. Let me see my child—let me see my daughter. She is asleep, said the governess, and has need of rest; you cannot think how much she was affected by what passed yesterday; she has great sensibility; a sensibility uncommon at her age. Let me see her, repeated I—let me sit by her bed side—I will not disturb her—I only wish to look at her—for God's sake, Madam, added I, grant my request! which she accordingly did.

I was now conducted into a spacious hall, in which there were twenty beds, where the children were laid two and two, and three and three, Silvia being in one of the last. O! Madam! said I to the governess, how these poor children are crammed together. That is true, replied she; but my house is not large, and I am in want of beds.

When I came to Silvia, I found her asleep, and remained silent by her bed side near a quarter of an hour, fixing my eyes upon her, and saying, mentally, these are the features of my husband! I longed to embrace her,
yet

yet feared to awake her; and stooping to kiss her, raised myself again without doing so.

The governess at length desired me to quit this hall, saying it would not be long before the director was visible. How tedious he is! exclaimed I; and Mrs. Love, she ought to have been here before now—she promised to come early—how cruel is my situation. Thus did I continue lamenting my distress, and accusing Mrs. Love of want of feeling, till the governess, who could not convince me it was still very early, sent to hurry her.

She in the mean time ordered tea to be brought, and I drank some with her; but often quitted my cup to exclaim Mrs. Love, will you never come! I at last heard a noise, and ran to the door thinking it was she, but saw only the overseer. Well, Mrs. Love? said I to him. She is coming, replied he; she is just behind. I only came first to satisfy your impatience. You should not have quitted her, rejoined I; she will meet with some acquaintance that will detain her.

Cruel

Cruel Mrs. Love ! you, who are the cause of all my sufferings, come—come, and put an end to them !

I had scarce finished these words, when I heard her voice, and running towards her, exclaimed, oh Mrs. Love ! how unhappy you have made me by staying so long ! I then put some money into the overseer's hands, desiring him to drink my health, and excuse the impatience of a mother.

The moment the director rose, which was soon after, I flew to his apartment, and was struck by its magnificence. If the poor were ill accommodated, he lived in splendor, and never once reflected that his money would have been better employed in supplying each of these miserable individuals with a bed. He received me with great haughtiness, of which I took little notice ; but thought him very tedious. He attended to what we had to say with great coldness, and then replied, that he should enquire into the affair. I had hitherto restrained my resentment ; but this was too much to be borne with patience.

You

You will enquire, Sir † said I—you will enquire into the claims of a mother!—I demand my child, and you must give her up to me this instant!—Who has any right over her but myself? and then recovering myself, through fear, have pity on a mother, Sir, added I; she is my only child—I was obliged to be absent from her a great while:—She has been deprived for years of my maternal care; but I am now come to fetch her, and will repay all the expence you have been at on her account. These last words softened the director, whom my warmth had only provoked; and he replied, that there was nothing to pay, as his house made no demand on those who were supported by its bounty, though charitable donations were always acceptable, as they were very much wanted.

I understood what this meant, and presented him with twenty guineas; in return for which, he gave me an order to take away my daughter, and made me sign an instrument to certify that I had received her.

I now

I now quitted him with the utmost precipitation, and running to Silvia snatched her up in my arms, and withdrew from this house, scarce giving myself time to thank the governess and Mrs. Love.

I immediately hired a room, where I had my daughter new dressed, and where I vented the tender effusions of a mother's heart. Oh Silvia ! cried I, embracing her, do I again press you to my bosom !—nothing shall now separate us—nothing shall ever tear you from me ! After having employed myself in this manner for some days, I set about collecting the wreck of my fortune, which I did not accomplish without great difficulty, and without losing half what was due to me. Finding myself possessed but of a small sum of money, I now felt how much my daughter stood in need of her uncle's assistance, and therefore wrote to M. d'Abol, from whom I received no answer, but heard soon after that he had died of an apoplectic fit some time before, and that his widow was returned to her family in a distant province.

vince. As new troubles now beset me, and as I had nobody to consult or any friend to assist me, I determined to write to the curé who had my husband interred, and to whom M. d'Abol had communicated our history, only suppressing the manner in which I had effected Vareuil's escape out of his dungeon. He answered my letter almost immediately; and as I had recalled to his remembrance a part of my misfortunes, exhorted me to make an attempt to obtain something from my brother in law in favor of my daughter. He urged the necessity of my taking this step with so much zeal and affectionate ardor, offering to assist me to the utmost of his power, that knowing him to be a truly good man, I determined to follow his advice. I now thought of nothing but preparing for my departure for France with my daughter who was entering into her twelfth year, and approaching an age in which want is doubly dangerous. I began my journey with an aching heart, and could not again see the town where I had
lost

lost my husband without shedding a flood of tears. I rested two days, and on the third went to the house of Monsieur Vareuil, accompanied by Silvia; but was not admitted, as my brother in law was determined not to see me again. I now went in search of the curé to whom I had written. He received me with great cordiality, sincerely pitied my situation, and after reflecting some moments, himself undertook to plead my cause with Monsieur Vareuil, and promised to endeavour to soften him in favor of my daughter. I thanked him for his kind intention, and retiring with a grateful heart, recommended myself to his good offices.

He came to me a few days after, and informed me he had succeeded in part—Monsieur Vareuil, said he, who has no children of his own, has consented, through my intercession to receive his niece, to take charge of her education, to give her a fortune, and to marry her properly; he has besides consented to allow you a small pension, on which you may live comfortably in England.

How,

How, Sir! said I, is this the manner in which you have served me?—am I to quit my daughter, and to return to England alone?—am I to leave her in the hands of a barbarous uncle, whose inhumanity to her father bodes her no good?—What a service is this you have done me? No, Sir! I will never quit my daughter! but will thankfully accept a moderate pension, and will return with her to England. The curé, who assured me he had no hopes of my proposals being accepted, intreated me to think better of it, and accept the offer of Monsieur Vareuil. But all his efforts were fruitless. Leave thee, Silvia! said I, embracing her; dear and only pledge of my unhappy marriage!—leave thee!—and with whom?—Just heaven!

The priest, however, was not discouraged. He for several days made use of every argument his imagination could furnish him with, to induce me to accept the offer of Monsieur Vareuil, without my being sensible of his motive; tho' I often wondered at the warmth
with

with which he spoke. I never once suspected that he was himself eagerly bent on separating me from Silvia, through his attachment to his religion, and through the desire he felt of having her brought up in the Romish faith: yet this was the true and only reason of his exerting himself so much in my concerns.

As my money was almost exhausted, and as I feared involving Silvia in my ruin, I yielded to his persuasions; and taking my daughter with me, went to Monsieur Varcuil. He embraced us tenderly, confessed he had acted wrong towards his brother and towards us, and solemnly swore to repair the injuries he had done. He then hastened the arrangement proposed, which was to separate me from my daughter, and which, tho' I deferred it as long as I could, I was at last obliged to submit to. I did not however part from her without enjoining her to write to me on the slightest occasion, and that in the English language.

I shall not enter into a detail of what passed at our separation, or attempt to describe

scribe what I felt at quitting Silvia. Suffice it to say, that my heart was torn to pieces, and that the woman at whose house I lodged, and who had conceived a friendship for me, promised to have an eye on my daughter and on her uncle's conduct. I now returned to England; and during the first year, received several letters from Silvia, who seemed perfectly satisfied, and I had only to regret her absence. The second she wrote to me but seldom, and the third entirely passed without my hearing from her. During the last, I had been so much occupied in recovering a sum of money lost by a bankruptcy, that I did not give way, as I otherwise should have done, to my uneasiness on this account. I came in with the other creditors for four hundred guineas, after much labour and difficulty, and was going to put my money out to interest, when I received a letter, which, by the hand writing, I knew to be Silvia's, and opening it with precipitation, read as follows.

“ Return, my dear mother, and put an end to the sufferings of your child ! I have

been in a convent two years, where the most oppressive methods are made use of to compel me to renounce my religion, and to bury myself in this cloister. I write without knowing whether you will ever receive my letter, as those I have already written remain unanswered; and as many have been intercepted by my uncle, who has long since compelled me to write according as he dictated. A pensioner and intimate friend of mine, who is now quitting the convent, has promised to convey these few lines into your hands. Adieu! my dear mother!—come to my assistance or I die!”

What became of me on reading this letter!—Barbarous Vareuil! cried I—thou art surely intended for my scourge! I did not however lose time in unavailing reflections and complaints, but immediately wrote to my daughter, and to avoid raising any suspicion, only told her I could no longer resist the ardent desire I felt to see her, and to spend some days with her. I accordingly set out for Dover, and soon landing at Calais,

lais, took post for M—, the common vehicles of conveyance being too slow for my impatience. Here I ran to the house of my old landlady, and was thus accosted by her. Is it you, Madam, said she; ah! why do you come to this place? Monsieur Vareuil is informed of your coming, and expects you to-morrow by the dilligence; he has been busy—has obtained orders to arrest you as you come out of the carriage, and to convey you to a neighbouring sea-port, where there is an embarkation for the Isles. What is it you say? exclaimed I, in amazement;—can what you tell me be possible?—where did you hear of this news? From my son, replied she; who has long been in the service of Monsieur Vareuil. I intended, to have met you to-morrow on the road, in order to have informed you of this scheme; therefore delay not a moment, you have no time to lose.

As I had not sent away my chaise, I ordered fresh horses, and instantly set out for Paris; intending to throw myself for pro-

tection at the feet of the English Ambassador, which I had a right to do as a native of England; fear making me travel night and day.

On my arrival at Paris, I went to the hotel of my Lord, and asking to speak with him, was immediately introduced. Sir, said I, an unfortunate mother, and an English woman, comes to implore your lordship's support and protection. They have taken away my daughter; have put her into a convent; and strive to compel her to take the veil, and renounce her religion. They have besides obtained an order against me; they have laid a plot to have me conveyed to the French colonies, and to have me mingled with the abandoned women who are sent thither to people them.

His Excellency raised me from my humble posture with an air of benignity, and making me sit down, desired me to reassume my spirits and explain the affair to him more circumstantially; with which request I immediately complied, and related
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the history of myself and husband, omitting no circumstance of moment. He trembled at the recital, and exclaimed with emotion—afflicted mother!—worthy wife!—Yes I will protect you!—remain at my hotel, which is an inviolable asylum, and make yourself easy; I will give orders for proper attention to be paid you, and will this very evening set out for Versailles. I entreat you to be composed, for you will certainly have justice done you. The orders you complain of could not have been obtained but by fraudulent measures, and will certainly be revoked the moment the truth is known. for this purpose I set out for Versailles, and make no doubt of your daughter's being restored to you when I relate the fact as it really is. Had your husband had sons, as a Frenchman, they would have been subject to the laws of France; but you, as an English woman, have a right to demand your daughter. Depend on what I say, and rest satisfied; for I know the wisdom of this legislature.

I was re-assured by these promises, and his Excellency set out for the Court at Versailles directly, where he claimed the restoration of my daughter in the name of the King of England. To this demand he received for answer that he should have justice done him, but that the affair required time. Letters were now written to M—— in order to obtain the necessary information, and answers soon after received testifying that my daughter had herself requested to stay in the convent, and that she was on the point of abjuring her religion, her eyes being opened to the truth; to confirm which assertion, a declaration to the same purpose was inclosed, written and signed by her own hand. This intelligence greatly disconcerted the Ambassador; but he contented himself with saying that he should retire to reflect, and returned to inform me of what had happened. She is compelled, my Lord, said I—I am sure she is—they have forced her to write this false attestation, as I am certain her heart bears no part in it.

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The Ambassador, who was greatly affected at my situation, now requested that liberty might be granted me by the court to visit my daughter, and receive the declaration said to be her's from her own mouth, in order to prove whether her change of sentiment was voluntary or not. He further requested that a proper person, charged with executive orders, might be sent with me, to deliver my daughter into my hands in case the informations received proved false; and that the safety of both our persons should be insured while we remained in France, where my affairs might detain me some time: which demands being reasonable, were granted.

I departed at his Excellency's expence, accompanied by one of his secretaries; and arriving at M——, went directly to the convent where my daughter was confined. The person who was charged with the orders preceded me, and was already with the bishop, several priests, (among whom was the curé of the parish) and Monsieur

Vareuil, who was very unwilling to be present, though compelled to be so by the orders of the King. I now demanded that Silvia should come out of the convent, and enter into the exterior parlour, where no grate could intercept our meeting, and soon beheld my poor girl, pale, trembling, and broken-hearted. She flew towards me the moment she saw me, and darting into my arms, burst into a flood of tears.

O! my child! exclaimed I, are you restored to me once more! never! never shall we part again! My mother! my dear mother! cried Silvia in her turn, is this possible! can it be! but save me—save me from the cruel violence with which I am oppressed! Oh! Vareuil! barbarous Vareuil! you are my uncle—my father's brother—but you have proved my tyrant! and then turning to the rest of the company, added—barbarians! what injury have I ever done you, what crime have I ever committed, to induce you to treat me thus cruelly, and to compel me
to

to enter into your measures? and then again throwing herself into my arms, entreated me never to leave her more.

The nuns now made an effort to reply, and to disprove my daughter's accusations, but all in vain, for I would not attend to any thing they could say in their justification. The ambassador's secretary then said, it was needless to wait for any other proofs, and turning to the person who had the King's orders, added, it now rests with you, Sir, to restore to this lady her daughter. The nuns again endeavoured to raise some obstacles; but the King's orders being read, they were immediately silenced, especially as those orders insured the safety both of myself and daughter. The secretary then concluded his office by saying, his Excellency would always exert his influence to serve me in future with equal zeal.

Thus was I rejoined to Silvia, certain of never being separated from her more. I now took her with me immediately to Paris, and went to return thanks to the ambassa-

dor, who continued his kindness to me, and advised me to commence a law-suit immediately against my brother-in-law. Humanity, said he, will certainly plead your cause; and should the laws be against you, your unhappy situation will mitigate their rigour. I followed his advice, put my concerns into the hands of enlightened men, and returning to M——, under the protection of the monarch, began a law-suit against Monsieur Vareuil. I shall not attempt to enter into the detail of my charges against him on this occasion, as my history has sufficiently informed you of their foundation, and only say, they were followed by all the disappointment and vexation that chicanery could invent and cruelty practise. My pretensions to being the wife of Vareuil were disputed, and the papers which authenticated my marriage were rejected, because that marriage was performed in a foreign country, and in defiance, as they said, of Monsieur Vareuil's vow. I pleaded my ignorance as an excuse for what I had done, alledging,

alleging, (as I might justly do) that neither I nor any body in London knew Monsieur Vारेuil's history or religious engagement till long after our marriage. I went to England several times; and after much trouble and difficulty, produced certificates of my marriage. But all my labour was in vain; and after three years of inquietude and vexation, the verdict was given against me, my pretensions were annulled, my marriage set aside, and the right of my husband to any part of his father's patrimony totally annihilated.

Overwhelmed by this stroke of ill fortune, I returned to Paris, and calling for justice anew, applied for redress to the grand council. But the ambassador, who was on the eve of his departure, not being able to be of any essential service to me, I had little hopes of success, as I had no other friend to assist me.

I however constantly attended my judges, in order to solicit their protection and conciliate their favour; but my daughter, who
always

always accompanied me, at length unfortunately attracted the attention of some of them and their dependants, and subjected me to the most humiliating proposals on her account. As we were one day coming out of the closet of Monsieur de ———, about three months ago, we were met on the staircase by a man about forty, who proved to be his nephew, and who addressed us in the most friendly manner. He desired to know the motive of our visit to his uncle, and seemed so much interested in our welfare, that I candidly confessed the cause of our coming there, and being in want of a friend, solicited his protection. He answered me in the most obliging manner; and desiring to be informed of the place of our abode, with an air that banished all diffidence, bid us adieu.

We a few days after returned to the house of the judge, and were told by one of his domestics that he was particularly engaged, but that if we pleased he would conduct us to the house of his nephew. Without reflecting

reflecting on this circumstance, I suffered myself and daughter to be conducted to the place he mentioned, where we were received by the judge's nephew with great politeness and seeming regard. He desired us to sit down; looked at us with great complacency; and taking one of my daughter's hands, I thought with too much familiarity, spoke as follows.—

You shall never regret, ladies, said he, having been deprived of seeing my uncle this day; for I will undertake to speak to him in your behalf, and make no doubt of prevailing on him to exert himself in your favour. Your situation deeply interests me; and the concerns of this fair creature shall always be near my heart, provided she is not insensible.

Silvia, who is open, lively, and artless, replied in a manner that flattered his vanity; while I assured him he might depend on our gratitude and respect. I desire no more, said he immediately, and hope you will come and see me often: but you, Madam, added he,

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he, looking at me for some time, seem to be infirm, and therefore need not take the trouble of accompanying your daughter; she may come alone; and you may depend on my honour. My daughter, Sir, rejoined I, with a serious air, never quits me, nor ever goes out but under my protection. To this he made no reply; and after a conversation which signified nothing, and which I was heartily tired of, I took my leave, resolving never to return to him more; reflecting, as I went, with scorn on the injustice and duplicity of men, whose senses are so easily inflamed, and who so cruelly take advantage of the unfortunate.

Monfieur de Valoure (for that was his name) suffered not the week to elapse without coming to visit us, and told me my law-suit went on, tho' its issue was uncertain. If you would follow my advice, Madam, said he, I would have you give it up; other resources may be had, and I myself can suggest some to you, as Mademoiselle is not formed to be without them. He then entered

tered into a further discourse, which left me no room for doubt, and exasperated me so much that I lost all patience. Is it so, Sir? said I with firmness—Is it to me, who am a mother, that you presume to talk in this manner, and to make such base proposals? While we thought generosity, candour, and virtue, were the motives of your conduct, we honored you; but be assured nobody while I exist shall enter my doors with such a disposition as yours.

Though Monsieur Valoure seemed surprized at the warmth with which I spoke, he was not in the least disconcerted. Madam, said he coldly, do not be angry; but reflect on your situation, and do not reject the offer I have made you: quit, I beseech you, these foolish prejudices, which only redouble your misfortunes, and follow my advice. I will load you with benefits, and will marry your daughter to advantage; she shall be properly settled, and you shall live at your ease. Monster! cried I, now rising from my seat, fly, fly, from this place,

place, infamous seducer! or I will treat you as you deserve! He seemed terrified at my rage, and instantly retired.

As several days elapsed after this event without my hearing from this false character, and as I had not visited his uncle during that time, I began to think no more of him, when a lady advanced in years came to hire an apartment in the same hotel. She seemed very reserved, and kept close to her own apartment for some days, never seeing any body, and seeming very pensive; but at last meeting Silvia by accident, she enquired into our situation, and paid us a visit. She appeared greatly affected at our misfortunes, entered into our concerns with the utmost apparent humanity, and assured us she had herself sustained great strokes of adversity.

As she seemed in a situation equally distressed, we cultivated her acquaintance, and an intimacy taking place between us, we sometimes walked out together.

Being

Being one day obliged by a long stop of carriages to turn down a street, she, who knew the way better than we did, led us through several others, and at last stopped at a magnificent hotel. O! my dear friends! cried she, on the instant, how lucky this is; I have particular business in this house, which I may now transact, and save myself the trouble of coming again; be so obliging only to follow me, and stay in the antichamber a few minutes; my business will soon be done.

As we were under no apprehensions, we followed her, and were introduced into a small hall, where we sat down, while she went to the person she asked for at the door. After we had waited in this place about a quarter of an hour, some body entered, which to my great astonishment I saw was the valet of Valoure. He was equally surprized, and addressed me thus—Ah, Madam, to what a place are you come! what could induce you to enter into any connexion with the infamous woman

man who accompanied you?—They are now in treaty for your daughter, are disputing about her price, and Monsieur Valoure is the purchaser, who has borrowed this house of a friend. Fly! unhappy victims!—fly! added he—and escape by this door, which leads to a private stair-case!

It is impossible to describe the terror I was in. I seized Silvia by the hand; and following the valet, who conducted us, reached the street door, where we heard some body cry out stop those ladies. The Swiss however, thinking we were only to be detained in order to be pressed to stay longer, suffered us to enter the street, where we walked with precipitation, and where he cried out to us that some body wanted to speak with us. We answered, that as we had no time to spare, we could not return; and then being void of fear, as the street was crouded, returned home very melancholy and dejected; being taught, at our own expence, how necessary it is to be cautious of making new acquaintances.

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The unworthy woman who had betrayed us appeared no more; but the money of Valoure opening all doors to him, gained him admittance here, where he hired a room under a false name, and where we were obliged to stay on account of the money we owed for our lodging. We were last night free from all apprehension. I had retired to rest, and all was quiet; but my daughter having unhappily neglected to bolt her door, the monster took advantage of her neglect, and rushed in. You know the rest.

Thus did Madame Vareuil finish her history. But to describe my feelings during its recital is impossible, a thousand various emotions of horror and compassion having agitated my soul in turns. The resolution and fortitude this excellent woman had exerted during the course of such trying events excited my admiration and respect, while my eyes involuntarily fixed themselves on Silvia (on whose face candour and virtue were strongly marked) and who became doubly interesting by her misfortunes.

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How happy am I, said I mentally, to have been the cause of preserving this innocent victim from the snare that was laid for her. And then taking my leave of Madame Vau-
reuil and daughter, with sincere professions of attachment and zeal, retired to my own apartment to reflect on this singular law-suit, which I resolved to exert all my skill in order to gain.



END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.